SHORT STORIES

THE DAINTY HOME STORY PAPER.

TARTAN COVER — No. 9.—BRUCE.

No. 747.] Week ending April 25, 1903. [Price One Penny.

A KODAK for 5/-

The No. 1 . .

BROWNIE.

Gives Pictures 2½ by 2½ Inches.

Despite its small size and low price the No. 1 BROWNIE is a thoroughly efficient little camera, and yields photographs as clear and distinct as possible. No dark room is needed for changing the films. In use the Brownie Kodak is simplicity itself.

THE NEW BROWNIE KODAK

The No. 2 . .

BROWNIE.

Gives Pictures 3½ by 2½ Inches.

MARVELLOUS VALUE PRICE **10/-** ONLY.

Finders for vertical and horizontal pictures. Everset time and instantaneous shutter. New and convenient spool-holding devices. Improved non-detachable winding key. Loaded and unloaded in daylight.

Ask for the Kodak Catalogue of all Photographic Dealers or of

KODAK LTD., 43 Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.

Wholesale and Retail Branches: 96 Bold Street, Liverpool; 72-74 Buchanan Street, Glasgow. *Retail Branches:* 59 Brompton Road, London, S.W.; 60 Cheapside, London, E.C.; 115 Oxford Street, London, W.; 171-173 Regent Street, London, W.; 46 West Strand, W.C.

J. G. GRAVES

CUTLERY

THE "ENTERPRISE" PARCEL, 25/-

Contains: 6 Table Knives and 6 Dessert Knives, made of reliable Sheffield Steel and fitted with polished white 'Ivorette' Handles. "Ivorette" is the best substitute for genuine African Ivory. The Plate consists of 6 Table Forks, 6 Dessert Forks, 2 Table Spoons, 6 Dessert Spoons, 6 Tea Spoons, 6 Egg Spoons, 2 Mustard Spoons, 2 Salt Spoons, 1 Pair of Sugar Tongs, 1 Moist Sugar Spoon and 1 Pickle Fork.

Casting "Columbian" Silver.

The Spoons and Forks are made of 'Columbian' Silver, a hard white metal. It is the finest substitute for Sterling Silver known, will wear white throughout, and is unaffected by acids or exposure.

THE "ENTERPRISE" PARCEL of Household Cutlery and Plate, 25/-

J. G. Graves is the only Manufacturer who supplies the Public direct, and the whole of the above Goods are made in the Firm's own factory in Sheffield.

TERMS. Send 5s. with order and complete purchase in five more monthly payments of 4s.; or HANDSOME BONUS PRESENT for full cash payment.

All orders are executed under 'Positive Agreement' to refund the full amount of the deposit if you are not perfectly satisfied.

Send for No. 1 Catalogue of Watches, Clocks, Cutlery, etc., Post Free.

Good Agents Wanted. No Risk. Good Pay.

J. G. GRAVES, 69 Division St., SHEFFIELD.

Headache

Kaputine cures the most obstinate Headache or Neuralgic Pains in ten minutes. Is the *only* preparation of its kind having the confidence and recommendation of Medical Men.

Kaputine
THE SAFE REMEDY

Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., says: There can be no hesitation on the part of anyone suffering from Neuralgic troubles to employ Kaputine—the safe remedy.

The only remedy of its kind used in British and Foreign Hospitals and Infirmaries.

Packets of 18 doses 1s.

KAPUTINE LTD., HUDDERSFIELD.

Neuralgia

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

THE

"OCEANIC"

THE UP-TO-DATE

HALF-GUINEA

BRITISH BOOT.

STYLISH—DAINTY
DURABLE—COMFORTABLE

ASK FOR AND SEE THE STAMP 'OCEANIC' INSIDE EVERY BOOT.

SHORT STORIES

No 747.] Week Ending April 25th, 1903. [One Penny.

The Chronicles o' Glencrackit.

By G. VINCENT HOLYTOWN.

The Witch o' Linogil.

At the side of a mossy path which wound its way through the heart of Glencrackit Woods, a wizened old woman sat crouching by a fire of twigs.

Over the blaze a little pot swung from a low-hanging branch, and she was gazing steadfastly on its bubbling contents, mumbling to herself the while.

"Aye, bonnie laddie," she muttered, "what a day o' bitterness lies afore ye; an' a' for love. What though I warn ye tae turn, it'll mak' ye but the keener tae gang on. But I'll warn ye, for your guid, a' the same."

Elspeth Strachan, reputed amongst the superstitious to have powers of witchcraft, bent closer over the pot. She seemed to see therein something of surpassing interest.

"There, he's left the hoose noo," she whispered hoarsely. "He'll pass this wey within half an 'oor."

* * * * *

Captain David Ogilvy, the Laird of Linogil Estate, was the descendant of a long line of soldiers, with an oft recurring fatality for dying in battle. When not quartered with his regiment he spent his time on his estate, looking after the interests of his tenantry. Twenty-seven years of age, handsome, dashing, and generous, he was deservedly popular with all.

To his humbler tenantry he was particularly agreeable. Poor old Elspeth had held her lowly cot, rent free, with a pension thrown in, for four generations of Ogilvys, and was probably the humblest of all. She was, therefore, the recipient of the courtly Laird's special attention, his kindly attitude towards her being that of one actually honoured by her tenancy.

No wonder then that the "Witch o' Linogil" adored her Laird.

On this lovely morning things seemed fair and full of promise to the Laird of Linogil. His cheery whistling broke in upon the rustling of the forest, stirring the very birds to chorus his joy, and the quick time of "My love is but a lassie yet" heralded his sprightly gait.

A raucous voice arrested his progress. Turning he beheld old Elspeth beckoning him to approach.

"Come here, ma braw son," she was repeating.

"Oh, is that you, Elspie!" said the Laird genially.

"Yea, Laird, it's me. I've come three lang miles tae prevent ye in the day o' your calamity."

"Come now, Elspie," bantered the Laird, "you mustn't talk to me about calamity to-day. You should prophesy good about me and not evil. They tell me you're a bit of a sorceress, Elspie, so you can spae me a golden fortune, and I'll cross your palm with a golden piece."

"Na, na, Laird," replied Elspeth, "I'm nae witch, wi' pooers o'er guid an' evil, sae I canna mak' or mar your destiny. Ye speak like Balak an' Ahab. But whiles I ha'e the gift o' second sight an' I'll tell ye, withoot fee or reward, what'll happen tae ye between noo an' sunset."

"Well, well, Elspie," said the good-humoured Laird, "tell me the worst," and he leant against a tree in a pose of smiling resignation.

The old woman fixed her bright black eyes on his face and responded abruptly:

"Ogilvy, there's danger aheid, turn back!"

"For that very reason, Elspie," laughed the Laird, "I must push on. An Ogilvy never turns his back on danger."

"I ken that, my laddie, so ye maun e'en gang for'a'd. But, eh, sir, ye little reck the anguish that awaits ye."

"Never mind, Elspie, tell me all about it," said the Laird tolerantly. "Forewarned is forearmed, you know."

"Then list ye, Ogilvy o' Linogil," she began. "Your lady love will this day refuse ye——"

The sceptical smile faded from Ogilvy's face, and he shifted his posture uneasily. He was astounded that Elspeth was aware of his intention, that very day, to seek the hand of Lily Allen in marriage. Impressed thus by her knowledge of fact, he was impelled to attach some weight to her prophesy. To believe it, however, meant the premature blasting of his fondest hopes, and his buoyant heart struggled against belief.

"If she does so, Elspeth," he said gravely, "I shall ask her again on a happier-omened day."

"Ye will not, Linogil," she responded decisively. "It's written that this day, but never again, will ye ask her to mairry ye."

Captain Ogilvy did no longer doubt but that Elspeth's words would come to pass. Pale-faced but calm, he stood bolt upright now, like a soldier receiving sentence of death.

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

"You talked of danger, Elspie," he said gently. "I see nought but sorrow in your words."

"Ye havena heard me oot, Ogilvy. Your troubles only begin then."

"Not so, Elspie, all else after that can matter little. Robbed of all hope——"

"As ye will be!"

"Robbed of hope, life itself would lose its charm."

"Oot o' despair springs the danger o' cooardice. Remember ye're a sojer, Ogilvy, an' resist it. But that'll no' be your chief danger. Ye'll be tempted sair tae dae evil. Ye maun wrestle wi' temptation an' vanquish it. The Deevil himsel' will proffer ye the cup o' specious bliss. Dash it frae your lips, Linogil, for, as surely as ye quaff, it will be bitterness in the latter end. Be wary, ma son, o' the first stranger that speaks tae ye, but mind that he comes tae nae hairm. Further than sunset ma second sight grows dim, an' I canna tell ye mair. But suffeecient for the day is the evil thereof, an' may Heaven grant ye the strength ye'll need."

Depressed but determined, hoping against despair, Ogilvy resumed his walk through the forest, and the trees seemed to be sighing forth their sympathy for him in his sorrow.

As he approached his trysting-place hope gained the ascendency over despair. He would evade, and defeat, the prophecy by reserving his proposal. The prophecy would fail in that he would *not* be refused that day. If it failed in part, it would fail in all. He laughed aloud in the joy of his triumph over superstition.

* * * * * * *

Lily Allen kept her tryst. They met. The moments sped, bright-hued, and fleeting into hours, and still he lingered in her smile. That sad, sweet smile, which through the three short weeks of their acquaintanceship had haunted him night and day. Never had her presence seemed so radiant as on this meeting, when they wandered together, in unwhispered love, on the banks of the brawling Prossen. Reaching at length a pleasant little dell where, amidst a grove of trees, the trickling Burn of Pearsie merges into its noisy rival, they stopped.

"Here is the meeting of the waters," she said softly, adding hesitatingly, "and here must be the parting of our ways."

"Till to-morrow only, Miss Allen," he remonstrated gently.

"Yes, Captain Ogilvy," she responded sadly, "till the to-morrow that never comes. I leave Glencrackit to-day, and you will not see me again."

Ogilvy's heart sank.

"This is the ultimatum of the fate which I cannot evade," he muttered. Then he queried in a voice that quivered audibly, "But why leave so suddenly, and why for ever?"

Her lustrous eyes filled with tears, and her tremulous lips could scarcely frame the simple words—

"Forgive me, I cannot tell you."

Ogilvy's colour returned with added warmth. It seemed that Fate was forcing him to resistance. He feared that resistance would be futile. But nevertheless he would do battle. He felt better now that the first blow had fallen, and thus he spoke—

"Forgive me instead. I did not wish to search out your reasons through mere idle curiosity. My words were the wail of a heart that will break if you pass out of my life. Oh, Lily, you are all the world to me. I have loved no other, I can love no other but you. I ask you now to accept that love. Be my wife, my adorable one, and instead of the parting, let this be the blending of our lives for ever."

The girl was weeping bitterly now.

"It cannot be, David. I love you, ah, how much you will never know. But I cannot marry you. There are circumstances in my life which absolutely prevent me——"

"Lily," he said, looking straight into her truthful eyes, "I care not what those circumstances may be. I love you. You have the word of Ogilvy of Linogil that they matter nothing if you love me and will marry me."

"Love you, for ever! Marry you, never, David! I should be a curse to you, not a blessing. We must part, my love. Good-bye."

She held out her hand. He took it and held it in his.

"May I kiss you once?" he whispered.

"Yes, David, you may, I love you so," she breathed.

He released her hand and folded her in his arms. Responding to his embrace she held up her lips to his. One long, clinging kiss and then murmuring, "Good-bye, my love, be brave," she tore herself free and was gone.

* * * * *

This little love drama had been witnessed and overheard by a third party. Scarcely had the lady disappeared, when the eavesdropper rose from his crouching position behind a clump of foliage. He was a very handsome, well-dressed man of thirty, clean-shaven, barring his neatly-waxed moustache. His features, though prepossessing, wore a look that perpetually flickered between cunning and nervousness, that of a sharker and that of a hunted man.

"I presume I am the villain of the piece," he whispered to himself. "How opportune. I must turn this to account, and quickly."

He was about to advance, when he paused.

"I am a villain, I know," he told himself, "but I have my limitations. I will not interrupt the man at his devotions."

For David Ogilvy had knelt and was praying for strength to bear his great trial.

When he rose he moved over to the broiling pools where the Prossen, congested between rocky banks, plunges over the boulders, with a dull roar of anger. The churning and seething of the water suited the turmoil of his mind.

How he yearned to know what dread obstacle stood between him and Lily Allen, that he might hurl it aside.

Presently he perceived the scent of a cigarette, and, turning, he found himself face to face with the stranger, whose approach had been unheard mid the noise of the waters.

Admirably cool, bland, and even fascinating, the newcomer promptly addressed him.

"I believe I can tell you what you probably wish to know, Captain Ogilvy."

"In regard to what, sir?"

"In regard to your rejected proposal of marriage, which I inadvertently overheard. Forgive me if I seem abrupt. I am in haste, but willing to be of service, ere I go."

The inflection of his voice was delicately polite. The speaker was so obviously a gentleman that his words gave no offence to Ogilvy, whose one thought was to seize the opportunity presented to him.

"Then tell me why my proposal was rejected," he said.

"With pleasure," replied the stranger. "Might I here interpolate that if you could oblige me with the loan of fifty pounds, with I confess, but slender chances of repayment, you will render me an equal service?"

Ogilvy was expecting some request of the kind, and, drawing out his pocket-book, he counted out and handed over in silence the stipulated sum.

"Pray accept my best thanks," said the other, "and, in reply to your query, I may state that the lady cannot marry you because—bigamy is illegal. She is already—unhappily—married."

Ogilvy stared in vacant horror at the speaker.

"Are you sure—you know—the lady?" he faltered.

"Positive. She is my wife," replied the other placidly.

Ogilvy put his hand to his eyes to brush away the mist

Digitized by Google

Why did the landscape reel and totter as it did? Then recovering himself, he replied to a question put to him.

"Your nearest way to a station? Across the suspension-bridge a little lower down. Stop! not that way," he shouted, above the roar of the water.

The other, deliberately disregarding instructions and warning, poised himself on one boulder for a dangerous leap across a swirling pool, to another boulder in the centre of the torrent. He did so successfully, but in taking off again to reach the other bank, he slipped on the slimy stone and plunged headlong into the gushing flood.

Instantly sucked below by the current and jammed between two semi-sunken slabs, his efforts to save himself were powerless against the tons of rushing water that forced him down. He raised a despairing hand in mute appeal for help.

It seemed to Ogilvy that in that instant some foul spirit whispered in his ear, "Let him drown—drink deep of the draught I proffer—quaff the cup of love."

But the horrid suggestion found no lodgment in his mind.

Dropping into the pool, he clung to a fallen tree, and struggled over to the drowning man. Succeeding he contrived to extricate him and drag him to the bank, senseless and bleeding, but alive!

And a wizened crone, witnessing the rescue, clapped her hands with joy. "I kent Ogilvy o' Linogil w'u'd dae what was richt," she croaked.

Ogilvy's exertions were not yet over. The man became conscious but was too weak to walk. He stood in urgent need of medical aid, and Ogilvy bore him tenderly to the nearest farm-house. Elspeth Strachan nodded her approval as he passed with his burden.

"See," she exclaimed, pointing west, "the sun begins tae set, for a' I ken your troubles may be near an end."

Ogilvy shook his head grimly and staggered to the farm-house. *She*—Lily Allen—stayed there, he knew, and when with blanched, affrighted face she gazed upon him, he laid his burden gently down before her with the words:

"There, Madam, is your husband, I—I saved his life."

She tried to speak but her lips moved voicelessly.

The man raised himself weakly on his elbow.

"I owe you my life," he said to Ogilvy. "That I can never repay. I owe you some money which I will repay now. I owe you more, an explanation, and—the truth. I am Victor W. Allen, escaped convict, blackmailer, fugitive from justice. That lady is not my wife, she is my sister. Disgraced by her relationship to a wretch like myself, she was at least determined that the contamination should not extend to you."

But long ere the explanation was completed, Ogilvy was by her side with his arm around her once more.

"Was that all?" he scoffed. Apparently it was, and seeing he didn't mind, no one else need trouble.

As a matter of fact, no one else knows anything about it. Victor W. Allen is abroad now; nobly retrieving his past.

The gallant Laird of Linogil and his lovely wife are as popular a couple as exist in the whole county. And it may also be suggested that those who wish their fortunes spaed cannot do better than consult Elspie, the "Witch o' Linogil."

Love, the Postman.

The Tale of a Sprained Ankle, a Girl, and a Cyclist.

"I WISH we had brought our bicycles," repeated Nora disconsolately, "and I'd take it myself in a minute."

Her twin-sister raised herself on her elbow on the sofa.

"Are you *quite* sure there is no one?" she asked.

"*Quite* sure, all the men on the place are harvesting to within an inch of their lives, even the women are in the fields. If only Martha were here, we might have harnessed the cob between us, and I'd have driven there and back in no time."

"There's the pony," said Dora eagerly, "could you put him in by yourself, do you think?"

Nora, equally a town-bred girl with her sister, looked a little scared at the suggestion.

"If he's in the stable I wouldn't mind trying," she said at last. "I've helped Martha several times, and I believe I know how the straps and things go now."

"Look, look, then," said Dora—"can you see him anywhere in the field?"

Nora went to the window.

"Yes, yes, I see him," she cried distractedly, "he's careering about like mad. I could never catch him."

"Oh, if he's in the field it's hopeless," said Dora wearily. "I've seen Robson try to get him then, and he's too artful for anything. Besides, you're strange to him, and I don't believe it would be safe. Oh, what is to be done. Here I am tied to this wretched sofa and my darling, darling Charlie who loves me so, will think I don't care if he doesn't get my letter by to-morrow. He said so."

"Well, but if you can't post it, you can't," said Nora practically—"suppose you send a telegram first thing in the morning, and I'll be up ever so early so that I can bribe one of the men to put the pony in during their breakfast time."

"Oh, I couldn't possibly send a telegram," said Dora, with a deep blush. "You have never had a proposal of marriage," she went on, with an air of consequence, "so you don't understand, but you can't accept one in that way."

"Well, leave out that part," said Nora, "and just say you would be very pleased if he accepted the English appointment. He says he'll abide by your decision, and as he has to decide to-morrow, you *must* wire. Yes, Dora, I see no other way for it, you must send a telegram to-morrow."

"I can't—I can't," wailed Dora. "Oh, if it were not for this dreadful sprained ankle, I declare I'd walk every step of the way into Milchester and back, and ask no one to post my letter."

"It's nearly nine miles there and back," said Nora, "and it's pretty late now, but I'll have a try, if you like."

A gleam of hope came into Dora's eyes and died out.

"Oh, no," she said, "I daren't let you, it's such a lonely road, and you don't know the way very well, and it might be dark before you get home, and I know you're frightened of the dark—well, not frightened exactly," she added hastily, "but you don't like it, and it's not as if it were your love-letter either. No, I can't let you even for Charlie, I should work myself into a fever before you got back."

Digitized by Google

But Nora was putting on her hat even while her sister was speaking.

"No, it's all right," she responded, in reply to Dora's expostulations. "I've got a splendid idea. I'll just stop someone riding or driving by and ask them to post a letter in Milchester for me. And mind you write important on the envelope, so that they can't forget it's of the utmost consequence."

"Nora, you're a clever darling," said her sister. "Yes, I'll do that, and be for ever grateful to you. You understand my feeling about the telegram, I'm sure, don't you?

"I couldn't do it, could I? It would make me appear so—so forward. And yet if he didn't hear at all, not knowing how we are fixed, he'd think I didn't care."

"Well, it's going to be all right now," said Nora, "I think I've settled it. Give me the letter; is it ready? Now, don't get anxious if I'm gone a long while. You see, it's no good intrusting it to the first comer. I must just sit by the roadside and wait till I see a good honest, trustworthy, intelligent face."

Nora, having possessed herself of the precious love-letter that was to mean so much to its recipient, set out on her errand with her courage screwed to the sticking-point, for although she would not confess it to her sister, the last few minutes had robbed her plan of some of its brilliancy.

She was shy by nature, and it did not now seem at all an easy task to accomplish, this waylaying of some stranger, whom she was to press into her service.

At this point of her reflections she closed the farm gates behind her, and found herself in the long, lonely, Milchester road, stretching and winding for mile on mile over flat country.

No relief offered in the landscape beyond the occasional clusters of trees which, grouped here and there in a hollow, marked the outlying farms.

Dorothea and Eleanor Conynghame were orphans, and lived with an aunt who chaperoned them, and with whom they shared their small fortune. But she had gone to pay a long promised visit to old friends, and the girls were spending a long summer holiday in a farmhouse amid surroundings that delighted them—an ideal holiday, until one day Dora sprained her ankle, which mishap had since kept her sister almost as much a prisoner as herself.

Nora, rejoicing in the soft summer air and the lazy sense that pervaded everything, sat herself down by the side of a clover field to await the person who was to be her sister's messenger.

Presently the clatter of horses' hoofs broke on her ears, and she strained herself to listen and be on the alert. They came nearer and nearer, and a dog-cart with four young men in it, bowled past.

They were laughing, talking, smoking—Nora was dismayed at the mere idea of asking a favour of them, a more favourable chance, she argued, could scarcely fail to present itself.

After a long interval a countryman pedalled by on a worn-out bicycle; from the groaning of the one and the creaking of the other Nora doubted whether either of them would get much further on their road.

At last her heart beat high with hope, for here were two girls, girls of her own age, bearing down upon her. They were almost within hailing distance, and Nora had actually risen to her feet when they suddenly wheeled about and soon became mere specks in the distance.

Next a boy came past driving a bright business cart, and Nora sprang up.

"Stop! Oh! will you stop, please?"

The boy drew up and got down.

"What is it, miss?"

"Oh, please," said Nora. "I want you to post this letter for me in Milchester."

"I bean't going that way, miss," said the boy. "I be only going as far as Ferrymere Mills."

"Where's that," said Nora, "don't you pass a post-office?"

"I dunno as I do," said the boy, "maybe I shall, maybe I shan't. It just depends on the flour."

This was altogether too vague, so Nora thanked the boy, and decided she must wait again.

After this no one passed for a long time, and Nora had begun to despair, when once again she saw a cyclist coming in her direction.

She watched him anxiously, but he was coming at a good pace, and in fear lest he might pass her before she could stop him, if she waited to convince herself of the honesty and intelligence of his features, she flung herself without further hesitation in his path, waving the letter in front of him.

"Would you please—would you please, post a letter for me," she said, in breathless haste.

The young man, whose progress was thus barred, dismounted not ungracefully, considering the circumstances of the abrupt appeal, and lifting his cap politely, inquired very courteously if he could render her a service.

In spite of his even conventional tones, there was so much veiled admiration in his eyes that Nora felt herself grow crimson.

"It is only," she stammered, with downcast lids, "we are so far from the post; if you are going to Milchester, would you please put a letter in the box for me? It is a very important one," she added, giving him the letter, and raising her eyes to him, "or I wouldn't have asked you."

Lawrence Pembroke smiled at the ingenuousness of the remark. He thought he had never seen a sweeter face or a more bewitching glance.

His way, in point of fact, did not lie through Milchester in the least, but he vowed it did, and took the letter, promising to be a trusty messenger.

Nora thanked him and, her mission accomplished, was about to turn gratefully away, but she saw that the cyclist did not attempt to remount his wheel. Instead he walked on by her side, and when she reached the farm, held the gate open until he was voluntarily compelled to let it swing to behind her.

"Enderby Mills," he read on the gate. "Surely I have heard that name before. I wish to goodness I could remember where, for then I might have a chance of finding out something about that sweet girl, not that it would help me much, I daresay, for she's sure to have a lover already; it must be a love-letter she's given me, what else? Hang the unknown fellow!

"But she looks such a child, she can scarcely be engaged. I wish I had asked her name, though I expect I should have had a fine snub for my pains, and deserved it too. Anyway, here goes, I'm going to look at the address on her precious letter, and find out what I can.

"When a fellow falls head-over-ears in love at first sight, as I've done, he can't stand at trifles, and I'll bet my bottom dollar it's to some man."

The inscription on the envelope proved to have fully justified his speculations, for it represented the name of his most intimate friend:

Charles Manners, Esq.,
19, Hewland Square,
W.

"Charlie, by all that's wonderful," exclaimed Lawrence, "then I'm done! For this must be the girl he's always talking about. Well, I understand his infatuation now. I might have recognised her from her photograph, but no, it doesn't half do her justice

Digitized by Google

"Well, of all the unlucky brutes, I'm one, for I don't believe I'll ever get that girl's face out of my head or the love of her out of my heart. Now I know where I heard the name of the place she's staying at.

"I suppose old Charlie has had that appointment offered him, and he wrote straight off to her, and this is the answer to it. I wonder if it is to be or not to be. I'm as anxious to know as Charlie can possibly be.

"I promised to be a trusty messenger. I'll take the night train to town, and post her letter there myself, and call on Charlie first thing, to know his fate—and mine!"

Early next morning Lawrence called at his friend's place. He found him at his breakfast, perusing for the twentieth time his love-letter just received, and after one look at his face Lawrence felt he scarcely needed to ask the question that trembled on his lips.

"Will she or won't she, that's what I want to know?"

"She will!" exclaimed Manners, "congratulate me!"

"I do with all my heart," said Lawrence. "I acted special messenger to you, old man," he went on, indicating the letter, and slightly stretching his adventure. "You're a lucky chap!" he added enviously.

"And the happiest in the world!" said Manners. "I'm going to start straight off there to-night. She's down at Enderby Mills, you remember I told you. I say you might come with me."

"Yes, and play gooseberry," sneered Lawrence, unable quite to control himself—"a nice *rôle!* No, thank you."

"Oh, but there's a sister," said Manners. "I've seen her too—Nora—a jolly nice girl, not up to my Dora, of course, but still pretty enough."

"Oh! I don't think I'll come," said Lawrence morbidly. "Girls aren't much in my line."

"Don't you think Dora the prettiest girl you ever saw in your life," exclaimed Manners. "But, I forgot, you've not seen her. Wait till you see her."

"I *have* seen her, man," ejaculated Lawrence impatiently. "I told you."

"Oh, you saw Nora, I expect. You've mixed them up, the names are so confusingly alike—not to me, though, of course."

"I don't know what you're driving at," growled Lawrence.

"Well, you saw one of them, that's certain," laughed Manners good-naturedly, "and it certainly couldn't have been Dora, because you see what she says—she's laid up with a sprained ankle. That's why I'm going off to her now, the darling. It was Nora, her sister, who gave you my letter."

"Then, which on earth," Lawrence stuttered in his excitement—"which on earth are you engaged to?"

"Dora," said Manners, "not the one who gave you the letter," he explained. And then in view of his friend's altered countenance, a light broke on him, and he exploded with laughter as he began to grasp the situation.

"Upon my word," he said, "if I don't believe you have fallen in love with her twin-sister. Well, she's as free as air, I believe."

"That settles it," cried Lawrence, grasping his friend's hand. "I come with you to Milchester. Start any time you like. I'm ready."

"I'll write at once," said Manners, "and say we'll be with them this time to-morrow."

"Nora," said the pretty invalid, as next morning Charlie Manners' letter fluttered in her dainty hands, "what *do* you think, you know that cyclist that you admired so?"

"I didn't," protested Nora, with crimson cheeks.

"That you said you did, any way," went on Dora remorselessly, "well, that you gave my letter to. Well, what do you think! He's a friend of Charlie's, his greatest friend, and he's bringing him with him to-day. Now, what do you think of that?"

Whatever Nora thought on the subject she refused to communicate to her sister, but it was noteworthy that she shortly found occasion to leave Dora's room and go to her own, and that when she returned Dora asked, not without a gleam of mischief, why she had put on her new muslin frock.

"For whose benefit is that?" asked the naughty prisoner to the sofa, "not for Charlie's, I hope. Come now, no poaching!"

"Dora, how can you," exclaimed Nora. "I never thought of such a thing. It's so hot and this is my coolest dress."

"And your prettiest," said Dora, "and you look very pretty in it. I foresee Mr. Pembroke will be vanquished with great slaughter!"

"Dora, I shan't stay to listen to your nonsense any longer! I shall just go away and leave you to your fate, and tied to the sofa."

Nora was as good—or as bad—as her word, for in spite of the protestations of her twin, she went downstairs and out in the garden, taking a book with her to sit on the lawn reading.

But her thoughts would wander, and when she heard the click of a gate and the scrunching of gravel underfoot, and descried two male figures standing in the porch they went further afield from its pages than ever.

She reproached herself for not having stayed in the house, and taken Mr. Manners up at once to see her sister. Well, it was too late now, for somehow an unaccountable shyness had possessed her, and she felt that not even for Dora's sake could she enter the drawing-room and make formal acquaintance with Mr. Manners' friend.

But Lawrence Pembroke was a young man who did not usually let the grass grow under his feet.

Mrs. Clay, the farmer's wife, had already carried off his friend to his sweetheart, and his own impatience would not allow him to remain in the pretty flower-scented drawing-room, so he boldly stepped out through the open French windows and went to reconnoitre. Fortune was indeed more than kind for the object of his admiration and his search sat before him in full view.

There was no escape possible for her now, even if she had wished it.

Mr. Manners' friend stood before her, introducing himself.

"Do you remember," he said eagerly, "two days ago you asked me a favour. To-day I am going to beg one of you. Will you grant it as readily as I granted yours, I wonder? That would be only fair!"

"But, but," she stammered confusedly, hardly knowing what she said, "I didn't ask you for myself."

"You darling!" he said delightedly, taking up her words. "No, that's just what *I* am going to ask *you* for."

"And if at that moment Nora's answer was not all that an ardent lover might desire, at any rate Fortune usually favours the bold, and events proved that Lawrence Pembroke certainly lost nothing by his impetuous wooing.

Ellice Beere.

"Mary, has anyone called while I was out?" "Yes, ma'am; Mr. Biggs was here." "Mr. Biggs? I don't recall the name." "No, ma'am; he called to see me, ma'am."

Papa: "Yes, my son, you will realise some time, when you are old, that your schooldays have been your happiest ones." Tommy: "Oh, papa, why can't I wait, then, until I grow up, before I go to school, so that I can appreciate it?"

The following Tartans have already appeared on the covers of "Short Stories":

No. 1.—MENZIES ...	*Issue dated August 2nd, 1902.*
No. 2.—MACPHERSON ...	*" " August 16th, 1902.*
No. 3.—MACLEOD ...	*" " September 13th, 1902.*
No. 4.—ROB ROY ...	*" " October 4th, 1902.*
No. 5.—MACMILLAN ...	*" " October 25th, 1902.*
No. 6.—MACDONALD of SLEAT	*" " November 29th, 1902.*
No. 7.—ERSKINE	*" " January 3rd, 1903.*
No. 8.—CLERGY ...	*" " February 7th, 1903.*

Digitized by Google

HIS CLEVER RUSE.

Telling of the Discovery of a Hidden Love.

"No, Tom, it is useless. It is not that I do not love you, but marriage at this time would be an obstacle which would prove insurmountable to the working out of my plans and my ambitions. I am so confident of my talents that I know I will succeed on the stage if only given a fair chance."

Tom Lawson was wise enough not to argue the matter further this time. He had watched Cora Barton struggle with other illusions, and knew that time acted as a safe and sure curative.

He would wait for the operation of the same medicine to purge from the girl's mind the complacent belief in her own histrionic ability.

That Cora Barton did possess a talent for theatrical work was a fact not to be denied. She also possessed the temperament, and what was much in her favour, a stage presence that made managers look up and wonder "if something might not be made of that girl."

Her mother and father died when she was quite a young girl, leaving her a competence, and making the girl more or less independent in spirit. The guardianship of a maiden aunt did little or nothing to curb her artistic longings.

At the age of twenty-three, with a seminary education, improved by a few years of travel at home and abroad, she determined to seek a stage career.

Tom Lawson had known her for many years, and so devoted was he in his affection that he had followed her from one end of the continent to another.

Enlisting the services of a friend who was only too happy to show his little importance by securing her an introduction to one of the big theatrical managers in London, Cora Barton had been given a hearing.

The manager was favourably impressed, and in putting on the second play of the season she was advanced several steps on the ladder.

The girl's enthusiasm painted pictures in her mind of the audiences rising from their chairs and demanding her to bow and bow as the curtain would be raised and dropped at the end of each act in plays written specially for herself by the master playwrights of the day. It was at this time that Tom Lawson renewed his suit.

He had been so constant in his attentions that the girl had ceased to consider them as such.

Although he was strongly opposed to the career she had set for herself, he advised her from time to time, and his counsel had been followed with appreciable advancement in the stage work of the young actress.

There was no doubt that the girl would make a complete success on the boards, and this was a source of new discomfort for the man who loved her.

It was always a pleasure for him to see her from one of the orchestra stalls, but upon leaving the theatre he was more ill at ease than when at home reading or wondering what the end of things would be.

Then came the third and decided success. The critics had ceased talking of the girl as formerly a member of Society, and were contented to judge her work on its merit.

Tom Lawson stopped his idling and hovering about the flame of Cora Barton's stage splendour. He went to his clubs oftener, dined out with friends and entered generally into the social pleasures of a very merry winter. His visits to Cora at her home, and in her dressing-room became less frequent.

One night there was a theatre party, and Tom was one of it. The seats were well in front, and very soon after her first entrance, Cora Barton caught sight of her faithful old friend with what seemed a very happy and very pretty girl.

That night the actress repeatedly changed her position on the stage to get a better view of the girl who was seated next to Tom Barton. When she was driving home from the theatre her mind was troubled. She admitted to herself that she did not like things as they were.

The play was an unqualified success, securing for the star an abundance of well-merited praise from critics and public alike. It was such a piece of dramatic art that the theatre lover might find even the second and third performances more to his liking than the first.

This may have been the reason why Tom Lawson and the fair young lady whom he escorted on the evening of the theatre party saw several performances of the play during the first part of its run. They always occupied seats well in front or in the left proscenium box.

The social columns of the newspapers said a great deal of Tom Lawson that winter, and one Society reporter went so far as to hint at his engagement with a girl "fairer than all the fair." Cora Barton read it, and her sweet disposition suddenly changed.

At the performance that night she stuttered over her lines, and the manager said some unpleasant things to her before she retired to the dressing-room after the last curtain.

Other papers made the same insinuations about Lawson, and instead of reading the theatrical news with her morning coffee, Cora Barton found herself running through the Society columns with the eagerness of a débutante.

The girl changed inwardly and outwardly. This was apparent to her companions of the stage, and the manager grew greatly displeased with her work. One day he sent for her and told her that unless more snap was put into her part he would be required to fill it with some one else.

"Why, Miss Barton," he said, "you nearly ruined that scene in the third act last night, and Miss Galter told me that if it were repeated she would not go on with you again. I am sorry, but you see for my own protection I have been forced to put another at work studying your part in case of emergency."

As a climax to her nervous discontent and uneasiness of mind, Tom Lawson, with the same beautiful girl, appeared in their customary places in the left proscenium box on the night following.

To aggravate Cora Barton's disquietude they arrived in the midst of one of her finest declamatory efforts.

The girl finished bravely enough, but she knew in her own heart that when the one scene in which she was supposed to show her talent would come, that this night she would make a signal failure.

It was not exactly a signal failure. The leading lady fumed and said:

"What wishy-washy work that is. Either you or I go, Miss Barton, and"—with a fine sarcasm—"I don't think it will be I."

The manager said:

"Really, Miss Barton, I dislike this very much. From to-night on your part will be filled by another. I may have something for you later in the season, or, if you care to go out on the road, I will place you."

"I might as well give it up at once," Cora Barton said to her aunt the next morning. "Oh, if I could only see Tom. I know his advice would be just the right thing, and he would comfort me in this misery. I wish I were far, far away!"

There was no need to send for Tom Lawson. He knew already what had happened, and when he called upon Cora Barton that afternoon there was an air of assurance about him that portended a victory of some sort.

One hour after he was ushered into the living room of the pretty little flat all was settled, and a honeymoon planned for early in the Spring of the next year. **Louis Honig.**

Digitized by Google

GREAT NEW SERIES.

Confessions of a Self-made Girl

The writer of these Confessions relates in this series of articles the true story of her life, from the time when she left Cornwall, an unsophisticated but ambitious girl, until she made her name and fortune. Her name is well known to you.

[*For the purposes of these Confessions I am calling myself Maud Cardew, as my real name is too well known for me to wish to make the story of my life public in this manner.*]

The Principals in the Story.

MAUD CARDEW.—The self-made girl.

HON. ROBERT LESTRANGE. (Commonly known as Bobbie.)

REGINALD (DI) NORTHCOTE.

Men who had helped her to come to London and befriended her on her arrival.

The Duke of Midlandshire.

It was a merry party that Lady Filby brought together for a week or ten days at Grindewald that Christmas. We were having a short vacation lasting until New Year's Eve, so Yorke Donovan was one of us, and Prince Kia was there, and a German Count.

We had a separate suite of rooms at the hotel, and all the men had plenty of money, which, of course, made it jollier for us.

I suppose Prince Kia was looked upon as my particular admirer, but, as a matter of fact, the German Count ran him very close, and Yorke Donovan was too attentive for my peace of mind.

The two first did not worry me in the least, they were both such thorough rogues of a certain class, that I did not care whether they languished with imaginary heartache or not. But Yorke Donovan was a good fellow, not yet spoilt by success.

Lady Filby had set her heart on him for the time being, and I did not want to have any unpleasantness with her. So I shunned him so far as I could, and amused myself with the two foreigners, only hoping I should not get them involved in a duel, or anything of that kind.

The first day we were there we spent all our time on the ice, but the second we boldly ventured forth on a tobogoning excursion. The Prince and Count both tried to persuade me to start down the slide with them, but I insisted that they should go alone first to get their hands in a little.

About twenty yards down the slide there is a sharp curve round the top of a bank, and, if you are not very careful, you shoot over this bank on to your head in the snow. Well, the Prince started first, and of course, when he reached the curve, his tobogan became unmanageable, and over he went, head first down the bank.

Almost at the same moment the Count pushed off after him, and, to my intense amusement, shot off at exactly the same spot, and landed head first on the top of the Prince. For some minutes Yorke Donovan and I laughed so much that we could not speak, and then we became aware that the two men were almost at each other's throats.

"For Heaven's sake don't let them fight!" I exclaimed, and watched anxiously.

"They will, though!" said Yorke, as the voices grew angrier, and the gestures more menacing.

"Oh, it will be horrible!" cried little Lady Filby, "and spoil all the week. Do stop them, Mr. Donovan!"

"I'm afraid I should only make matters worse," he said anxiously, glancing at me as if for advice.

A sudden idea leapt to my mind, and instantly I pulled up my tobogan, squatted down anyhow, and started off along the track. As a matter of fact I think I could have rounded the curve easily, but the quarrel had to be stopped somehow, so I headed for the bank as if I could not help myself, and, with a laughing cry, shot over and toppled in the snow at their feet.

A girl watching at the top told me afterwards that Yorke Donovan exclaimed "Bravo!" and started running forward leaving Lady Filby alone, looking as black as thunder. I fancied it was from that moment she began to dislike me. But I gained my end, for the two enemies were so concerned about me they forgot their quarrel, and we presently returned quite amicably to the top.

"How could you?" were Lady Filby's first words, in a tone of disgust. "My dear, I never saw anything more unladylike!"

"Then I hope you never will!" I replied quietly, and prepared for another descent. This time I rounded the curve and shot to the bottom, including the "devil's leap" without any disaster, and with intense enjoyment.

At the bottom of the slide I found a young man, sitting on his tobogan, awkwardly endeavouring to tie his handkerchief round his right hand. He was an Englishman of aristocratic though somewhat effeminate appearance, and he was clearly in difficulties.

I watched him covertly for a moment, then volunteered my help. He thanked me, and at once held out his hand, which

Digitized by Google

he had cut somehow with his tobogan in a spill, and all the time I was tying it, he sat gazing into my face.

"If I am not much mistaken," he said, "I have the honour of being attended by Miss Maud Cardew?"

"You have," I said curiously, "if it can be called such, though I wonder that you should recognise me out here."

"I ought to," he answered, "seeing I have ten photographs of you, and have seen you in the same piece fifteen times."

"You must have been rather hard up for something to do," I said, feeling myself colour, and trying to laugh it aside lightly, and, just then, to my relief, Yorke Donovan shot safely over the drop, and landed at our feet.

I turned to him at once, exclaiming, "Isn't it delightful?" and added, in reply to his questioning glance, "I have just been helping this gentleman tie up his hand as he had hurt it. Come, are you going to be magnanimous, and pull my tobogan back?"

He took the string at once, and, with a casual farewell nod to my unknown admirer, we started the steep, upward ascent together.

That evening there was a big dance at the hotel in which we took part, and I quickly discovered my morning's patient among the gay throng of people. He was watching me, and, when our eyes met, made a step as if to come forward, but I felt I had quite as many followers on my hands as I could manage, and turned sharply away to chat to the Prince.

The whole evening he watched me, though I persisted in taking no notice, and the Count wanted to call him out for it. Feeling as if I had come away with a cargo of bombshells, I implored him to do nothing of the kind, and was considerably relieved when at last we all met in our own sitting-room for cigarettes and coffee before retiring.

But again Fate seemed determined to pursue me with adventures, and, while cutting a difficult figure in a quiet little spot on the ice next morning, a man floundered clumsily into me, and knocked me flat on my back, just as my unknown admirer chanced to skate in my direction.

Of course he rushed forward and commenced to pick me up in the most solicitous fashion. I was really quite stunned for the moment, and glad to be led to the nearest seat.

I quickly recovered myself, however, and could not help smiling at the dire imprecations he muttered on the unfortunate individual who had knocked me down. When he saw that I was quite all right, he at once hastened to grasp his opportunity, and I knew that I was caught.

"Why wouldn't you let me be introduced to you last night?" he said. "Or at any rate come and ask for a dance?"

"Because I hadn't one to spare," I replied coolly.

"You mean you didn't want to have one?"

"No, I don't," I told him frankly. "But I am here with Lady Filby's party, and we had agreed to keep together."

He seemed surprised, and was silent a moment.

"I did not know you were here with Lady Filby," he said presently, and something in his speech made me colour. "I concluded you had met here by chance."

"I do not see what difference it makes either way," I answered stiffly. "I think I can skate quite well now," and attempted to rise. I did so very unsteadily, however, and was glad to sit down again.

"I am here to meet Lady Fitzclarence's party," he continued after fussing round me a little. "They arrive to-morrow, are you staying long?"

"No, only a week," I told him. Then I could not refrain from adding mischievously—"That is if none of my bombshells explode unexpectedly, and we have to go before."

He laughed in a boyish fashion that reminded me of Bobbie, and that was decidedly refreshing after my foreign companions, but I wished he had not quite such an effeminate air about him.

He was altogether too pretty, with light, curly hair, carefully parted down the middle, American fashion, blue eyes, and a pink and white complexion. Also he wore an eye-glass and a diamond ring, and I strongly object to both.

At the same time he was emphatically a man who knew his world, and, before we parted, he succeeded in making me promise him three dances that evening.

I remember my two foreigners, or my "menagerie," as he would persist in calling them, looked very black when he came and claimed me, and, as we glided away, he remarked laughingly, "I hope that black chap doesn't carry a knife about with him."

"So do I," I laughed, "for I think I should stand as fair a chance as anyone to make a sheath for it if he did."

"Why don't you palm him off on Miss Delaware?" mentioning another girl in our party; "and tell the German it is a pity his countrymen can't fight or make a living at home; and you would get rid of the two?"

"And what if I don't want to be rid of them?" I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders and remarked with a sneer: "Oh, of course, there is no accounting for tastes."

"No, and a change from one's own countrymen is a positive relief sometimes," I answered sweetly.

He was very sulky after that for a time, and I was pleased, for he was altogether too well satisfied with himself.

By the time our last dance came round, however, he had quite recovered, and was all the nicer for his snub. He got his own back a little though by remarking once: "It must be very nice to be so secure in one's own beauty and charm as to feel able to snub at will."

"Oh, very!" I said, and laughed with real enjoyment.

It was not until Lady Fitzclarence's arrival the next day that I discovered who he was, and then he was named among her party as the young Duke of Midlandshire. Yorke Donovan told me, and I was a good deal taken by surprise.

"Do you think it is correct?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he told me; "I remember him coming into the dukedom about three years ago. He went abroad big game shooting or something soon afterwards, and it was said it was to get away from various energetic mothers of beauties."

Afterwards I stood on a verandah, gazing at the towering slopes of the Wetterhorn, and thinking about Yorke's information, for it had made me feel thoughtful.

"Here," I said to myself; "is your second chance. Here is your peer."

A few moments later the young Duke himself came and leant his arms on the rail beside me.

"Well," he remarked; "are you looking for chamois?"

"No," I answered, after a moment; "I am contemplating what appears to be the unattainable."

"That's a thing I have never done," he said. "But if I could discover something unattainable, that I genuinely wanted, I should be thankful, and I should move Heaven and earth to get it. As it is, I have found it always a question of wishing and having."

"Because you are a Duke, I suppose?" I said quietly.

"Oh, so you've found that out, have you?" he asked, with a scarcely perceptible sneer.

"I was told of the fact an hour ago," I replied; "I should certainly never have taken the trouble to find it out."

"By Jove, you can hit hard!" he muttered, with an air of relish, and surveyed me with a new interest in his eyes; "I suppose dukes, and princes, and counts are mere dust and ashes to successful actresses?"

"Not at all," I answered; "they are indispensable to a certain extent in establishing her success."

Digitized by Google

"Do you know," he said; "I think you are too sharp. Beautiful women do not need brains, they are only to be looked at. The combination gives a distinctly unfair advantage. Now, if you had only the average brains, I could easily make you my toy—buy you with my position, you know—but, as it is, you are a deal more likely to make me the toy."

"Only as I am not in the slightest need of a plaything," I retorted; "the unfair advantage, as you call it, need not trouble you in the least."

"Ah, I see your menagerie still suffices," he retaliated; "have you taught them any new toboganing tricks lately?"

For a moment I felt annoyed, then I laughed.

"I think you have made things even," I said; "now I am going to look for Lady Filby."

That evening the Duke introduced me to Lady Fitzclarence, who received me with a good deal of gush. I did not care for her at all, but at the same time, found her amusing. Also she took a fancy to the German count, for which I was most grateful, but I think she was really there on the Duke's account. She had a husband somewhere, but she did not seem in the least clear as to his whereabouts, nor at all interested in them.

"I suppose as you are here with Lady Filby you are very gay," she said to me with a meaning laugh, and I felt myself grow very hot and angry without knowing why.

"It seems to be your handsome hero of the drama this time," she ran on; "I declare Betty Filby does like variety. It was an Italian singing-master last time. Why that fool of a husband of hers did not show her up, I don't know; but I daresay he felt so long as he could get quit of her nothing else mattered."

I got up suddenly, feeling as if I had received a blow, and crossed the room to a cool balcony. There Yorke Donovan joined me presently, looking worried and anxious.

"Ah," he said, in a relieved tone; "I wanted to see you."

Then he sat down and folded his arms, staring somewhat gloomily at the mountains.

I was glad to see him, and waited. I had a feeling that somehow he was like a rock among shifting sands compared with the rest of our companions.

"In some way you have made an enemy of Lady Filby," he said presently; "I think if she could, she would do you an injury."

"Do me an injury?" I exclaimed; "but why?—I have never harmed her and she is so friendly."

"I don't know," he said warily; "but I don't think she is quite what she seems."

I was silent, and he added:

"I only want to warn you to be on your guard. I may be mistaken, but it it is best you should be prepared."

I thanked him, and tried to laugh lightly, but my heart was beginning to sink a little.

That night we all met together in Lady Fitzclarence's sitting-room for a chat, and I must admit the conversation was not eddifying. Tales were told which will not bear repetition, and again and again I was on the point of leaving the room in disgust. I certainly should have done, had I not been a guest, and momentarily expecting the party to break up. When we finally left, the Duke strolled out with us, and persisted in lighting and carrying my candle. My room was at the end of a long passage, and before we came to the door, I stopped and held out my hand.

"There is no violent hurry, is there?" he asked, looking hard at me.

"I am very tired," I said shortly.

"Then I am sure you will drop the candle if I give it to you. If you have a headache, let me come in and bathe it for you."

"No, no," I exclaimed; "give me my candle at once!"

He gave a low laugh that sent the blood rushing to my face.

"I believe you are afraid of me," he said; "and I am surprised you are in such a hurry to send me away. Lady Filby's friends are not usually so particular. I rather expected an invitation to stay a little."

"How dare you!" I gasped, in a white heat of passion; "I have never been so insulted in my life!" And, pushing into my room, I slammed the door to and locked it, leaving him outside still holding the candle.

Then I went to the window and leant out, full of a sudden longing to feel the keen mountain air bathing my face. I felt as if I wanted purifying—as if I had become a loathsome creature because of my associates.

To me a nauseous atmosphere seemed to hang about the inside of the hotel, a hot, sickening, pestilential air of passion and degradation.

I felt as if I would like to go bare-foot up the mountain, and wash myself clean away from all humans, in the pure, eternal snows, nearest the quiet stars.

Instead, I went to bed in the dark, unable to face even my own reflection, and cried myself to sleep, wishing with all my heart I had listened to Di.

But there was worse to come, and I was to learn a good deal before I was safely in my own cosy flat again.

(Next Tuesday I will tell you why I returned from Switzerland.)

Digitized by Google

Just Pals.

How an Illness Brought on a Love Affair.

He smiled at her across the table and she flashed a look of saucy defiance back, and said:

"So you think it has been a great success?"

"Why of course it has—don't you think so?" he answered, with an intonation of surprise.

She lowered her eyelids until he could only see a fringe of dark lashes along the pallor of her cheek, and said slowly:

"Yes, I think it has—for once pure platonics have been tried and found possible."

"You were always the doubter," he said triumphantly, "so you admit that you were wrong."

"I admit that in *our* case it has worked all right, but I still think that as a general rule it is a very dangerous experiment."

"Well, you see I was quite right, and it is just a year to-day sinced we formed our contract—and I for one, hope that this time five years will see it still in existence."

She thoughtfully drew patterns on the tablecloth with a fork, and still kept her eyes down.

"Five years is a long time," she said. "Did it never occur to you that this may get monotonous, or one or other of us might want to marry, and then our respective husband or wife might object?"

"Yes, but *I* don't want to marry, don't intend to marry, don't believe in it, as you know perfectly well, and you have always said that you quite agreed with me."

"Well, it is the natural fate of all mankind and womankind too, and I do not see any reason why you should escape it."

"But what is the use of spoiling the present by vague imaginings of what *may* happen and probably never will."

She made no reply, and he looked at her downbent head wondering—as he so often did—whether all women were alike, and why they could never rest content with things as they were without puzzling and worrying over some mythical future into which it was impossible to see.

Personally, he was perfectly content with the present and could not understand why she was not equally so.

Few men probably would have been surprised that he was—for over a year the girl sitting opposite him had been his constant companion—and few weeks passed without seeing them together, either dining, lunching or spending long hours in Clarice Davenant's little drawing-room, discussing various subjects of vital interest to themselves, although of very little moment to the outside world.

Although only twenty-eight, Miss Davenant was entirely alone in the world, and in spite of Mrs. Grundy, she elected to live a perfectly independent life, without the assistance of the usual chaperon.

Naturally unconventional her life had tended to make her more so, and her contract, made a year ago with Denis Miller, to be "just pals" and no more and no less, as if they were men, instead of a good-looking bachelor of thirty-five and an extremely pretty woman, had been carried out as thoroughly as she did everything she entered into.

At first their somewhat erratic actions had caused much gossip and speculation among their mutual acquaintances, but as time wore on, people were content to let them alone, finding that they seemed to be quite oblivious to outside opinion, and they had adhered rigidly to the terms of their contract. Their dinner to-night was held to celebrate its first anniversary.

Clarice looked sweet enough to have tempted any man to lapse into love-making, however platonic his intentions, as she leant back in her chair, a little smile curving her perfect lips.

Denis Miller, as he looked at her, wondered for a moment why she was still without the golden circlet of matrimony round her slim fingers. He knew that more than one man had tried to tempt her to forsake her independent life for that of "double harness," but without success.

"Well," he said, breaking the silence that had fallen between them, "what are you thinking of—still worrying over the future?"

She laughed and roused herself from her reverie.

"Nothing at all," she said, "I was just dreaming in an aimless kind of way. At any rate, whatever comes afterwards, the present is very charming and you are certainly the most satisfactory of friends."

"And you are the most ideal pal that any man could desire."

"That being so, I think we had better adjourn our Mutual Admiration Society or we shall be late. I only hope you will continue in the same mind."

"Of course I shall—why shouldn't I?" he demanded.

"Oh, no reason at all, except——oh, nothing, let us go," she said hurriedly, rising as she spoke.

He sprang up and came round to help her with her cloak. When he could no longer see her face, Miss Davenant's smile became more decided, in fact in anyone less pretty it might almost have been termed a "grin," and a keen observer would have guessed that *she* perhaps did not believe quite so implicitly as her companion in the purely platonic theory, in spite of the fact that she pretended to do so.

* * * * * * *

A few weeks later Miss Davenant was entertaining a visitor at her flat—it was a depressing November afternoon, and outside in the street the rain fell with that persistent, depressing drizzle which is characteristic of London—not a good, thorough downpour, but a steady drip, drip, drip, which makes everything sloppy, takes hair out of curl, and straightens feathers, and otherwise afflicts the temper of the feminine mind, and, curiously enough, of the masculine too, although they are exempt from the burden of curls and feathers.

But comfort, warmth and light reigned supreme in the little drawing-room, and the good-looking, long-limbed youth who stretched himself lazily in a long chair, while his pretty hostess busied herself with the tea-table, looked the personification of contentment.

It was a curious fact that when in the presence of Clarice the majority of men wore a satisfied and generally-pleased-with themselves-and-everyone air.

She possessed that subtle power which some women seem to be born with and others can never acquire, of making a man feel satisfied with himself—a feeling of being appreciated and understood which acts as a balm to the male mind.

Their conversation flagged a little, and Clements said abruptly:

"Hard luck on Miller getting laid up just now, isn't it?"

"Laid up," she said, with a start. "Is he ill? I have not heard anything of him for three or four days and was wondering what had become of him. What is the matter?"

"I thought you have would been sure to know," answered Clements. "I suppose he was not well enough to write. He got a bad cold, and, instead of taking care of himself, went and

Digitized by Google

got wet and is in bed with—well, I don't know if it's pneumonia, but he will have it if he is not very careful.

"He won't have a nurse and he only has a man there, who is an awful ass, as they all are, and no use to keep him in order. I went in to see him, and he was banging about all over the shop and flinging the clothes off, and he was in such a beastly bad temper that I came away. I will look him up again to-morrow. By Jove, I must be off, it is late."

Clarice shook hands with her versatile visitor in a kind of dream, and was conscious of a feeling of intense relief when the door finally closed on him. For some time she stood and gazed thoughtfully into the fire.

"Denis was ill—he would have pneumonia if he did not take care. Supposing he were to get worse, why he might even die—people die of pneumonia very often——"

With an air of determination she walked across the room, and, going to her bedroom, she proceeded quickly and decisively to change her tea-gown for a plain black dress; then from some hiding-place she took out—two large nurse's aprons.

She looked at them with a little smile; relics of some nursing classes she had once attended, she had not thought then to what practical use they might some day be put.

She folded them carefully and put them into a handbag, then she paused and said aloud:

"Supposing he does not like it—if he should be angry with me—what shall I do?"

She hesitated for a few moments and then said decidedly:

"Well, if he is I can't help it. I could not leave him alone when he is ill to run such risks, it would not be acting as a friend if I did."

She put her hat and coat on, and picking up the bag, she returned to the drawing-room. She rang the bell, and when her maid appeared, said:

"Emily, I am going out to see a friend who is ill. I may not be back till late so I shall not want dinner. You need not sit up for me if I am not in by ten."

The maid withdrew, and Clarice moved towards the door. On a table stood a photograph of Denis in a silver frame. She stopped and picked it up, and looked at it steadfastly for a long time. Then with a half-shamed air she kissed it hastily, and went out.

* * * * *

"If you please, sir, there is a lady here."

"Lady, I can't see ladies now. What the dickens do you mean by coming to me with such messages, you——"

The awe-struck countenance of the faithful James was abruptly withdrawn, and was replaced by a vision—outwardly perfectly self-possessed, inwardly the very reverse.

"Clarice!"

"Yes, Clarice. I heard such an account of you from Mr. Clements that I decided there was nothing for it but to come and see for myself what was the matter, in fact, it was my duty—as a pal."

"What did that ass Clements say? I did not mean you to know that I was ill. I shall be all right in a day or two."

"He said that you had caught a very bad cold, and that you had no one here to look after you, and might get pneumonia if you were not taken care of; so I thought about it, and—and I could not rest without coming to see how you were—you are not angry, Denis?"

Her voice shook a little and she turned away, pretending to arrange some medicine bottles.

Perhaps he was weak and more depressed than he had cared to admit, but there was something suspiciously like tears in his eyes, and his mouth quivered under his moustache in a way that it was probably as well that she did not see. He caught her hand and carried it impetuously to his lips as he said in a low voice:

"You are an angel."

A fortnight later Denis Miller—now convalescent—sat in a big arm-chair before a blazing fire and watched the clock and the door alternately.

"Half-past four. She said she would be here by four—what is the matter, I wonder? Hang this pipe, the beastly thing has gone out again." He threw it down fretfully, and at that moment the door opened and Clarice came in.

"At last," he said, "I thought you were never coming. You said four, and it is half-past four now," in an aggrieved voice.

"I am so sorry, I could not help it. Mrs. Carlton came to see me and I could not get away."

"Mrs. Carlton—meddling old busybody, what did she want?"

"Oh, she came to give me some advice that was all—she has very good intentions and means to be kind."

"Her kindness seems to have had a depressing effect," Denis said. "You have been crying."

She turned her face away and began rather aimlessly to poke the fire.

"You need not poke the fire out," he continued. "What did Mrs. Carlton say, something about me, I suppose?"

"Well, she said—oh, that of course it was very kind of me to come and look after you when you were ill, and that of course *she* understood that we were very great friends, but that I was not a hospital nurse, and that I was young, and—and——"

"Very pretty," he put in. "Well, go on."

She blushed and continued:

"And that people would talk—and that they think it has gone a little too far, and that some people may even refuse to know me any more."

Denis got up and stood with his back to the fire.

"Old beast," he said, I expected something of this sort. Only a narrow-minded old gossip like that would say such things, none of your real friends would think of it."

"But still, Denis, you see you are nearly well now and do not want me so much, and I think perhaps I had better not come any more."

"Yes, I do, I want you more. What am I to do shut up here all alone?"

"You won't be alone, lots of people come to see you, and you will soon be well enough to go out again, and then we can meet as we used to. You see, while you were so ill it was different. You don't really want me now."

"Don't I," he said slowly. "Don't I? I am not so sure about that."

"Well, I don't see anything else for it but for you to get well as quickly as possible. One must consider public opinion a little, you know, and we do not consider it much."

He looked down at her dark head with its rippling hair.

"I do, I see one way that I can see a great deal more of you, every day and always."

She looked up at him with a startled expression.

"What do you mean, Denis?"

"I mean we might get married. Clarice, you have tried me as a friend for a year, don't you think you might try me as a husband now?"

"But you don't want to get married, you only want to be pals."

"Well, can't we be pals just the same and more than ever?"

Then, changing his tone, he said earnestly:

"Clarice, look at me—tell me, couldn't you care for me a little that way—is it too platonic for you ever to think of me in the light of a lover?"

She raised her eyes and looked at him, and they told him all he wanted to know. He held out his arms; she rose and putting her hands on his shoulders said softly:

"It has always been that way with me, Denis—only I thought you never would feel the same."

He put his arm round her and drew her head down on to his shoulder.

"I think it has always been that way with me, too, only I was such an ass I never knew it, and I thought we were only just pals, and we shall be pals always, sha'n't we?"

"Yes, always, only more so than ever," and she put her arms round his neck and sealed their contract with a kiss.

And it lasted more than five years after all.

Beatrice M. Studdy.

Digitized by Google

The Stolen Coins.

Telling of How a Magpie Nearly Broke two Hearts.

Lucy Brand busied herself in her spacious kitchen while John Norton gazed at her with the same intent, yearning look, which had come into his honest brown eyes every time he paid a visit to the "Thorn."

With his back to the fire, which served to render the bright, but chilly Spring day more pleasant, and his right hand passing over his beard in a manner which indicated deep reflection, John Norton's thoughts drifted to the farm half-a-mile away.

His eyes were fixed on Lucy, and his thoughts were fully occupied with her and her good qualities, but he did not see her in this kitchen, it was in the same room of the farmhouse where his imagination transported her, and a sigh escaped him.

"What is the matter, John?" asked Lucy, scarcely pausing in her work, but just turning to glance at him.

Very prim and staid was Lucy Brand; the kind of woman who takes life seriously, who sees a duty to perform, and does it without counting the cost to herself. She was approaching thirty-five, and she had not married because she conceived it to be her duty to remain with her mother and give her whole attention to that good lady.

She was the youngest, and, as often happens, the elders had married and gone away, leaving her to see after mother and sacrifice herself on the altar of filial affection.

When the end came and the mother was laid to rest, the elders thought that Lucy had played her cards well, because the goodwill and the stock of the combined inn and general shop had been willed entirely to her.

Lucy had set her teeth hard when the unkind hints reached her ears, and she had quietly informed the abashed brothers and sisters that she would give them the share to which they considered themselves entitled. She worked up the business, made it profitable, and gradually paid off each one, beginning with the eldest.

The years of devotion to her mother, and the time required to pay off unjust debts, had forced her to remain single, although she had received several good offers.

Of all the four or five young men who had looked with loving eyes at Lucy Brand, only one had remained steadfast through these years, and he was the man to whom she now turned with the inquiry, "What is the matter, John?"

"Eh, what?" asked John in reply, flushing somewhat guiltily. Then he answered more steadily, "I was thinking that the old place up there was very pleasant, these Spring days, but I am sorry that I can't have the place done up this year, Lucy! I haven't so much in hand as I expected to have, so I suppose it'll have to wait till next Spring. It's a nice place, but it's a bit lonely for one."

"The 'Thorn' is a nice place, too, John! It's the place where the old mother lived so many a year, and so ——"

"But surely you'll be thinking of selling the 'Thorn,' or letting it," he added the last clause hurriedly as she turned again to him with a vexed expression, "and be preparing to—to go somewhere else, Lucy!"

"Perhaps!" she responded doubtfully.

"Ah!" sighed John Norton.

He had waited patiently enough for Lucy, yet he had never actually asked her to be his wife. He understood the exact position of affairs, and he remained faithful to her, waiting till the time should come when she would consider herself free to take the step for which he so ardently wished in his easy-going style.

John Norton's wooing had been a silent one; by tacit agreement on their part, and by tacit agreement on the part of the neighbours, they were lovers, and destined to become man and wife some day.

"It's a bit lonely up there," John went on in his deep-toned voice, and the pathetic ring in it moved Lucy Brand this time. "There's no one to welcome me at the fireside when I come in from the fields, nobody but the girl, and she's no pleasant body to talk to.

"I'm thinking sometimes that it would be a grand thing to—to have a wife there. A true wife, who would watch for ye when ye came home, tired, and p'raps just a bit discouraged because things hadn't gone well on the farm, then, it would be a real pleasure to tell her the other side—when things had done well, and I'd got a good price for the corn, or some of the stock.

"And sometimes, no doubt, she would feel a little low-spirited about this or that, and I would cheer her and tell her how people can get through troubles all the easier when they're shared, although joys don't lessen when you have a partner, that's the advantage of joys over sorrows, you see, Lucy. Yes, it's a bit lonely!"

Lucy Brand stopped in the process of tidying the kitchen, and approached her faithful and patient lover; the debts were paid, and she was making money out of the "Thorn," but she was delaying the acceptance of that offer of marriage that was represented by the stalwart figure of John Norton. Why?

The old ties of the "Thorn" had held her, she had been reluctant to give it up, and she had thought of amassing a round sum in gold pieces before going to John. He had had a long pull to get his farm straight, and the mortgage with which the place had been encumbered by a thriftless and indolent father was still hanging heavily over John's head.

It would be nice to take a dowry to John, but was she acting fairly in thus keeping him waiting, and so depriving both of the happiness that was within their reach? By a strange exception, she was seized with an impulse, and she looked John straight in the eyes as she said—

Digitized by Google

"The loneliness will be past soon, John, and you will have someone to welcome you, and cheer you, and share your pleasures!"

"Lucy!" cried John. His hands trembled with a great happiness as he placed them on her shoulders and endeavoured to draw her nearer to him. "Lucy, when will you come?"

She was a good half-head shorter than he; she was gazing up at him, and his eyes were full of ardent love. Then the effect of the impulse wore off; she felt that she had been too hasty, and she drew back.

"I did not say that *I* would be the one who would welcome you home, John!" she cried in some confusion. "Perhaps——"

"You are the only woman for me, Lucy!" he cried sternly. "The only woman in the wide world who can make it less lonely on the farm, and you know it! I am waiting for *you*, and I will wait to the end if it is to be!"

She heard his footsteps as he went through the corridor, and out of the house, and she resumed her tidying-up with a heart racked by conflicting emotions; she was rather ashamed of her treatment of John Norton, yet she thought that she was doing right in the interests of both.

"I will go to him soon," she said, trying to silence the still, small voice within. "Then I can make it all up to him!"

John Norton came again on market-day, and she was relieved that his manner showed no signs of reproach. He was full of news.

"There's a circus or some sort of show in the village, in one of Grant's fields," he told her, "and I thought you would like to go, so I've taken tickets for a seat so as we shan't have to push with the others. I thought you would be pleased to go, and I know you don't like crowding!"

Lucy did not favour such variety entertainments to any extent, but as John had gone so far as to purchase a ticket for a seat in the front row for her, she would have gone to the circus but for the fact that she had already promised to let her two maids go while she remained at home to watch over the interests of the "Thorn." This fact caused her to shake her head slowly.

"Oh, it will make a change for you!" cried John, disappointed. "There are wonderful performing animals and birds, and all sorts of things. I've heard that they've got a magpie that will pick out a sovereign from a shilling, or even from a piece of brass gold-plated, and——"

John was proceeding to repeat the lines he had seen in the advertisement, but Lucy Brand cut him short gently, for she appreciated his desire to please her.

"I can't go, John," she said, "for I've promised to let the maids go. Then I must attend to my accounts, and I've quite a lot to do. You had better go, and perhaps you can sell the other ticket, so that the money will not be altogether lost. It's very good of you, John, and I'm sorry I can't go with you!"

"It's a pity you can't see the magpie!" declared John, who was clearly impressed by what he had read of the bird's cleverness.

"The magpie's lost!" cried a customer who had entered in time to hear the last words. He was flushed with the importance of being the bearer of news. "If they don't catch the bird before the performance this afternoon the show will lose a lot of its fun! The bird flew off this morning, I hear, and hasn't come back. The circus man says it's sure to return at dinner time, but I expect he says that because he don't want to spoil his takings."

John went off, promising to look in again as he went to the show in the afternoon.

Lucy Brand sat in her kitchen with the window open a few inches at the top, and settled herself to make up her accounts to the end of the month; this took her beyond dinner-time, and she sat down again to complete the task after the maids had left to see the show, and the "Thorn" was left in quietude.

She was not likely to be disturbed; everyone who could get away would be at the circus, and it was highly improbable that the inn would have a customer till after four o'clock

Lucy Brand took a small cloth bag from a drawer, and turned the contents into her lap, a little glittering heap of sovereigns and half-sovereigns. Not a great many, perhaps, but numerous enough to represent a good profit on the month's business.

Lucy was not miserly, but the sight of this gold created a feeling of warmth at her heart which was very pleasant. Two or three more little heaps of the same size, added to the figure of her bank balance, would make a nice dowry, and John Norton should have it all!

The ringing of a bell announced the fact that a customer had entered the inn. Lucy, with just a gesture of impatience, tumbled the money into the bag, placed it in a corner of the shelf at the back of her, and hurried to the front in order to wait on this new arrival.

"Good day to you, Miss Brand!" said the cheery voice of an old farmer from the next village. "I thought you might ha' been at the show over yonder in Grant's. I don't like to pass the 'Thorn' without looking in to hope you're well, and have a glass!"

"Good day to you, Master Gibbs!" said Lucy, returning the compliment. "I suppose most of the people are there, or on the way?"

She served him and they began to exchange news. The conversation was interrupted by hasty footsteps along the passage from the kitchen, and John Norton appeared.

"I'm late!" he cried. "So you can't come? Well, I'll run along! Good day, Master Gibbs! Things are pretty backward, eh?"

He was gone. It was not often that John Norton went in for amusement, but he seemed to have set his heart on this circus entertainment. He had passed in by the back to see Lucy, but, finding that she was in the front and engaged with a customer, he had not stopped to say more.

Master Gibbs took his departure, and Lucy Brand returned to the kitchen in order to finish her agreeable task. She went straight to the shelf for the little cloth bag, but it was gone!

She looked on the shelf incredulously; she could not believe that the bag was not there; it must be some optical illusion. Perhaps she had thrust it into the drawer and thought that she had laid it on the shelf?

This idea, however, was dispelled by the discovery of a sovereign and two half-sovereigns on the shelf and a second sovereign on the floor. The money had been taken, there was no room for doubt about it!

A thief in the village! It was an unheard-of event! There had never been any fear of robbery at the "Thorn," and Miss Lucy Brand could not grasp the fact at all. She set to work to discover how the robber had entered.

The window was in exactly the same position as when she left the room, and an examination of the sill convinced her that the thief had not entered by raising the lower sash.

The back door was not in the kitchen itself, but led into a short passage; the guilty person would need to traverse that passage and make three turns before reaching the kitchen. No stranger would know how to do it, and no stranger would do it when he could so easily get in through the window.

That window opened on to the private garden, so that it was impossible for a chance passer-by to have seen her with the money in her lap. Finally, no living soul had known that she intended to make up her accounts!

Stay! A cold chill diffused itself slowly over her whole body and her legs seemed to tremble as with ague. John Norton knew! He had come from the direction of the kitchen, appearing hurried and confused, at a time when he should have been at the circus! She allowed herself to drop into a chair and tried to think it out clearly.

She knew that he was short of money. The interest on the mortgage was due about this time, she remembered. Then, he had said more about marriage, in his diffident way, than he had ever done previously. He had probably regarded marriage as a means of escape from pressing money difficulties, and, finding that she was not ready, had—robbed her!

She tried to get rid of the horrible thought, but the more

Digitized by Google

she reflected, the clearer did John Norton's guilt become in her eyes. No one else could have realised the opportunity; John Norton, yielding to some great temptation, had stolen her gold!

She wiped away the tears that had welled to her hot eyes, wiped them away calmly, decisively, and with a set expression on her white face. She would tell no one about it; the secret of this base act should be kept by the only two who knew it—John and herself.

The old relationship was at an end for ever! For the first time she realised what that meant and she had to shut her teeth hard to prevent the moan that rose from the inmost depths of her woman's heart.

What should she say to him when he next came to her? Perhaps he would repent and return to her with the money and a plea for pardon. Yes, she would forgive him if he did! We are all likely to fall into evil, and we must all show mercy as we ourselves hope for it!

She waited for him to come, but the time passed, the maids returned, the inn was thronged with customers and John Norton was not among them. He had not repented and Lucy Brand grew hard of heart and features.

It was in the quietude of the Sunday afternoon that he came to her and asked her if she would go to the service at church with him. She shook her head.

"No, John!" she declared decidedly. "The people must not think any more that—that we are to be man and wife one day!"

John Norton's face paled under the bronze.

"What is this?" he demanded with quivering voice. "What do you mean, Lucy?"

"I cannot marry you, John! You know why, better than I can tell you!"

She expected him to quail before her steadfast gaze, but he stared at her with brazen effrontery, as it seemed to her.

"I know nothing!" he returned doggedly. "You are mad!"

"Not so mad as to marry a man when I do not love him!" she retorted. "I have changed my mind about you, John, and the reason for it needs no telling to *you!* You can go your own way in future, and I'll go mine!"

"You'll make me the laughing-stock of everyone in the village!" he cried angrily. "I ha' waited for you for years, and now you throw me over! Do you mean that?"

"I do!" was the firm reply.

"It's a woman's whim, and you'll be sorry for it! I'll go my own way, and when you want me to go yours again, you'll have to come and ask me to walk it with you, for I'll never come o' my own free will!"

A whole year passed. The villagers had wondered at the change in the conduct of John Norton, who never went to the "Thorn," and had not been so steady at farming since the discontinuance of his visits to Miss Brand, but the affair was an old story now and they had other things to think about.

The events of the preceding Spring had been recalled to Lucy Brand's memory by the announcement of the coming of the circus. The wonderful animals and birds, and the other attractions, were the subject of much gossip as they had been twelve months before.

"I wonder if the magpie will escape again?" asked one labourer with a laugh.

"I believe that the proprietor let un do it a-purpose!" was the opinion of another. "It makes a stir, it do, and the bird cooms back all right enow for the performance!"

"Jimmy's about right!" asserted a third. "The magpie was there, arter all, last toime!"

The opinion was then put forward that the bird had not escaped at all, and that the whole thing was a get-up, but this was scouted; some of them had actually seen the bird flying about.

The morning of the day on which the circus was to give its first performance was one of bright sunshine and the villagers were merry. Then came the report that the magpie had escaped, and it provoked general hilarity. It was all a trick, a piece of up-to-date advertising, but it had the desired effect of creating interest in the circus.

It was afternoon and the maids had gone to witness the performance. Miss Brand sat in her kitchen, but she was not making up her accounts; she had decided to postpone that process till the following day, in order that this day should not too closely resemble that other day.

As she silently brooding over the past, her attention was arrested by a flutter at the window. Looking up, she saw a bird standing on the top sash, which was open as usual.

"It's the missing magpie!" cried Lucy. "I wonder if I could entice it in here and catch it for them?"

She rose softly in order to find some morsel that would induce the bird to approach her, but the movement startled the magpie, which flew to a small tree in her private garden and disappeared in a hole in the trunk.

"I'll have it if I'm quick!" murmured Miss Brand.

She went quickly through the winding passage towards the back door and so to her own garden. She covered her hand with her apron, so that the bird might not peck her and plunged the hand into the hole.

A familiar sound on another tree made her turn, and she saw the magpie perched on a branch and looking at her knowingly.

At the same moment her covered hand touched something that gave forth the faintest of sounds.

Puzzled by this, she caught it up with the clumsy fingers and brought it to the light. Her arm shook to such an extent when she saw what it was that she nearly dropped it. Her own little cloth bag, with its golden contents!

With a screech the magpie bore down upon her and tried to snatch the bag, but she beat it off and ran indoors with her treasure. Yes, there it was, and the contents——? She counted the money and found that it was three pounds short; that was the amount she had picked up on the shelf and on the floor.

The magpie had entered through the top of the window, just as it had been on the point of doing to-day; it had seen her counting the gold and had carried off the bag, after picking out the four golden coins for amusement. She remembered that the magpie's contribution to the circus performance was to do something like that.

So that was the thief and she had accused John Norton most unjustly! "I will go to him and tell him that——"

A hubbub in the front. She left the kitchen and went to the door of the inn; four men were carrying a rough litter, followed by a dozen or so of the inhabitants. She cast her eyes towards the litter and gave a cry; John Norton lay upon it, his eyes closed as if in death.

"What has happened?" she cried.

"Thrown from his trap somehow! Don't know 'zactly what's happened," replied one of the men. "'Fraid he's dead! We're taking him to the farm."

"Bring him in here!" she said imperatively.

They hesitated for a moment, but finally obeyed. He was put to bed and the doctor intercepted on his way to the farm and brought to the "Thorn."

"Will he die, doctor?" asked a woman, with a white face and a subdued manner.

"I hope we shall pull him through, Miss Brand, but it will take time and great care."

"He shall have the care, doctor."

When John Norton was able to recognise anyone, the first person he saw was Lucy Brand. A strained expression passed over his features; she understood and bent over him.

"I have come to tell you I want you, John!" she said softly. "I have discovered my mistake and the great wrong I was doing you. I want you to get well, and take care of yourself in future, for my sake!"

She bent still lower and kissed him. He flushed with joy.

"Is it true, Lucy? Ah, yes! I have been a bit reckless and careless since *then*, because nobody cared for me! But I'll soon get well now and we'll be happy. Kiss me again, so as I may be sure!"

And she did.

E. Buckland.

Digitized by Google

BRAND NEW COMPETITION.

Cash Down. *Cash Down.* *Cash Down.*

1st Prize, £50. 2nd Prize, £25. 3rd Prize, £10.

And 25 Gramophones.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Below will be found six paragraphs containing the buried names of Railway Stations in the United Kingdom (or words that sound the same as the names). You must write in the spaces given the names of the Railway Stations so indicated.

No word or part of a word may be used more than once in making up the name of a Railway Station. In the event of the name of a Railway Station occurring more than once in a sentence, it should be underlined and written down each time. In case of more than one person finding the same number of words for each or any sentence, those words containing the largest number of letters will have preference. No name of a Railway Station may be composed of a single letter, either standing by itself or taken from any word in the sentences.

When you have discovered the names of Railway Stations in the sentences, underline (in ink) the words which go to make up the names (or words that sound the same as the names) and then on the line underneath each sentence write (in ink) the correct names of the Railway Stations to be found in each.

All the names will be found in the Index to Railway Stations in the January edition of Bradshaw's Guide. Should you be unable to obtain a copy of this Guide, a reprint of the Index will be sent to you for three penny stamps on application to *Bradshaw's Guide*, 59 Fleet Street, London, E.C.; or Room Eight, SHORT STORIES, 17 and 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

The names of the Railway Stations consist of one word or two or more consecutive words, or consecutive parts of one word, or two or more consecutive words.

The first prize of £50 will be given to the Competitor who fills in the greatest number of railway stations under the conditions stated. The second prize of £25 will go to the person who fills in the next greatest number, and the other prizes will be awarded in the order of merit.

When you have filled in all the names you can find, cut out the list below and keep it by you. Don't on any account send it to us until the closing date is announced in SHORT STORIES. A sixth list of sentences will appear next week.

In the event of a tie a further list (or, if necessary, several further lists) of sentences will be submitted to the tieing competitors until one wins the first prize outright.

CUT THROUGH HERE

EXAMPLE.

The oaks were swaying in the breeze, the cows were grazing peacefully, when out of the park tore a huge black bull.

The Oaks, Sway, Cowes, Grays, Park, Black Bull.

FIFTH LIST.

25. The British Museum contains specimens of Coalport and Worcester china, besides Doulton and Belleek ware.

26. She was out with the Quorn hunt and came in at the kill, winning the brush. Her mount, Vernon by name, was very fleet.

27. "I have found a stoat's nest," he explains during the recess. "May Gordon and Hoyland come home with me to take it?"

28. In the road were lying some curious grey stones, shaped like a triangle. They each had one bright side, the others overgrown with moss.

29. We hope to lay on a fresh water supply to the new houses we have just bought. There were only wells before.

30. During Spring cleaning Woodward spoilt two great coats by getting some reddish coloured paint on them. He was very cross because of it.

NAME..... ADDRESS .....

Digitized by Google

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE TRAMP.

Telling of a Queer Meeting which Ended in a Love Affair.

With a whizzing sound the biting east wind rushed through the streets, driving before it a cloud of fine snow that penetrated everything.

It lashed the faces of those unlucky pedestrians and drivers who were compelled to weather it, the snow filtering through the folds of scarves and other supposedly protective articles of clothing, it soaked into overcoats and made life well-nigh unendurable.

Only those who were forced to go from one place to another ventured outside the house in such dreadful weather, and they battled against the blinding snowdrift as against a flood.

Stay! There were others who had to endure the storm; these were the homeless, the waifs and strays of society, who, unable to get shelter by paying for it, struggled against the elements in search of some place to hide in until the sudden storm ceased.

Phew! A sudden gust, more fierce than its predecessor, drove a man against the railings of a house in a quiet street and made him gasp. He was a man of fair proportions, but weakened by cold and lack of food. His thin jacket was saturated; the strips of brown paper which he had fastened on his legs to keep out the wet were soaked also.

"I c-a-a-n-'t sta-a-nd this! It will kill me!" he said half aloud, as well as his chattering teeth and his generally frozen condition would permit him to speak. "This is awful! I thought I could have reached old Jack's crib, he might have given me a corner if there had been a corner to spare, though!

"For fivepence I could have got a bed, but I haven't earned one solitary ha'penny this mortal day—nor yesterday! And I'm as hungry——! If I had got any coppers I should have spent them in food, I suppose, not in the hire of a bed for the night!"

His benumbed fingers gripped the railings as another blast drove the snow against him. He turned his back to it and pressed close against the ironwork. It gave at his touch, and he found that it was a gate leading to a short flight of stone steps. He knew the kind of house.

The steps would take him to a door under the other steps that led up to the front door. Generally the space under the front steps was built into an apartment of some description, but occasionally it was left untouched, and the basement or lower floor was flush with the window of the lower room.

"I'll go down here!" he muttered in desperation. "There must be some kind of a corner that will be warmer than up here, and if they hand me over to the police, I shan't be worse off. By Jove, I shall be fed and kept warm, so I shall be better off!"

He slipped hastily down the steps, and, to his joy, found that the underneath space had not been built up, so that he could stand back in the most sheltered corner and be comparatively warm.

"This is one degree better!" he muttered, swinging his arms after the manner of carmen and others in an effort to get some warmth into his stiffening limbs. "I am wet through, so I stand a chance of turning into a gigantic icicle! The blinds of the whole front seem to be down, and I couldn't catch a chink of light anywhere! Perhaps there's some servant at the back who might take compassion on me if I ring. I'll try it!"

He fumbled about with his almost lifeless fingers for the bell knob. Ah! He placed both hands to it so that he could get hold of it, and pull, but the knob yielded to the feeble tug, and remained hanging down. The wire was broken.

"I'll get shelter if there's any chance—or prison!" he cried.

Placing both hands on the handle of the door, he tried to turn it and rattle the door at the same time in order to attract attention. To his surprise it opened and he found himself at the entrance of a dark underground hall or passage. There was a smell about it that suggested disuse.

"I'll have shelter, at any rate!" said the man in a tone of determination. "A careless servant has done me a good turn by forgetting to lock up the premises. Is it worth while exploring this passage? I think so! Hunger knows no law!"

Once embarked on an enterprise that might land him in prison, he seemed determined to go through with it. He groped his way along, feeling for a door, but he stumbled against stairs first.

"Hum! This is the way to the upper regions! I'm half inclined to believe that the house is vacant! Here goes!"

At the top of the staircase he found himself in another hall. On the left was an opening, and as he groped his way into it he was blinded by a sudden glare of light that made him start back.

"Don't be alarmed!" he cried involuntarily. "I am a starving and frozen man who has crept in here for shelter and to beg for food. I am honest, I swear it. I have touched nothing! Robert Amfield is not a thief, but he wants food! For Heaven's sake help me!"

He had expected to be seized by a masculine hand, or to hear the cry of a woman for assistance, but all was still. His eyes were becoming accustomed to the glare; he looked about him for the occupant of this illuminated chamber, but could see no one.

"What does it mean?" he asked himself in amazement. "Ah, I see. In groping about I touched the electric light switch! My apology was not needed, there is no one here. It seems to be a kind of dining-room and study all in one. But is there any food? If this electric light were gas I could get warm!"

He was getting bolder. He approached the fireplace and uttered a cry of pleasure. It was arranged for a gas fire, and there were matches at his elbow. In another minute the dull noise of the gas was heard and Robert Amfield was holding his hands as near to the flame as he dared.

"Gracious, it puts life into you!" he exclaimed. He moved the fender and crouched down against the stove. "My clothes are beginning to steam, and that may mean rheumatism, but that isn't so bad as death from freezing. I'll take my coat off to dry!"

Digitized by Google

For fully ten minutes he crouched thus, thawing himself, as he expressed it. He was not so saturated as he had imagined, and he soon felt nearly comfortable. Leaving his coat to dry, he began to seek for food.

"This is the rummiest go I've ever experienced—a sort of Liberty Hall without the consent of the proprietor! Query—Am I stealing this man's gas? Robert Amfield has not descended to anything shady yet, and he doesn't want to. Well, if I am caught I'll undertake to work it out in manual labour. That's fair, and my conscience is easy!"

The expression of tranquility that came over his face changed quickly to one of alarm, belying his statement that his conscience was easy. He heard a noise! He listened; was he caught in the act? What was it? A cry for help?

His manhood was aroused by the fact that someone might be in distress. Without waiting to put on his coat, he went into the hall and listened, the sound appeared to come from below or outside.

He made his way down the stairs and into the dark passage. He could hear the cry quite well now, although it was deadened by the howl of the wind.

He had left the door open, and the cry—it was more like a moan now—came from outside.

He was soon out in the open, where he could just perceive the figure of a man or boy lying in the snow. He caught the form in his arms and dragged it into the shelter of the passage.

He stood aghast at the sight of a young woman gazing at herself in the mirror.

"Oh, don't, you'll hurt!" cried the youth—for it was a lad of about eighteen. "I believe I've sprained my ankle, or broken my leg, or something!"

"Can't you rake up a few more injuries?" asked Robert Amfield, half amused, half sarcastic.

"My wrist may be dislocated for all I know!" declared the boy. "I'll have the law on you, Mr. Gentleman! It's a clear case of compensation! You left the area gate wide open for respectable people to tumble down. You did it on purpose, that's fact. I can get a lawyer to take it up and the judges will be down on you. How much will I take to square it, did you say?"

"No, I didn't!" retorted Amfield. "You can drop that line of persuasion, as I am not the proprietor of this hotel. I am sorry that you tumbled down the area steps—no, I suppose they are not exactly area steps. Anyhow, I'm sorry. But I don't think you are hurt much, just a bruise or two. There! You can stand all right enough. You're wet and hungry, eh? So am I hungry. I've got rid of the wet, and that is what we will do for you if you're civil and come upstairs!"

He led the astonished youth to the room he had just left and told him to get "right into that gas fire."

"I say," exclaimed the new comer, opening his eyes very wide, "this is all right!"

"Mind you don't set fire to that jacket of yours!" admonished Amfield. "The sleeves don't come much lower than your elbows, but there are long streamers of thread that might lead to a conflagration! You're a pretty-looking object!"

"Your costume ain't exactly correct for Piccadilly!" rejoined the lad saucily. "It's a case of the pot and the kettle, ain't it?"

"You're right!" said Amfield with a hearty laugh. "I forgot that I hadn't seen myself in a glass lately. We seem to be well matched! How did you come to be out in the wet?"

"How did you?" inquired the lad. "I expect your answer will do for both of us!"

"Right again!" declared Amfield. "Well, I'm on my beam ends, with no friends, no home, no money—no nothing!"

"I am ditto to every one of them," said the lad laconically. "Go on!"

"I tumbled into this vacant house for the homeless by accident. I had good prospects once on a time, and ambition, Tommy! Is that your name? If not, what is it?"

"Joe!" was the short reply. Then, in his former defiant manner, he added, "I can't ditto all that. The only good prospects I've ever had were good prospects of being in the workhouse. Perhaps I did have ambition—of a sort. I wanted to keep out of the union!"

"Poor beggar!" said Amfield sympathetically. "You're young to pass through these experiences!"

"Not so young as when I begun!" laughed Joe, who seemed pleased that Amfield spoke pityingly. "If you're running this superior boarding house, fetch out the eatables."

"I'm running it by proxy," said Amfield with an amused smile. "I will try to find something!"

He tried the mahogany cupboard while Joe watched him. Presently he drew out a dish with a cover, under which he discovered a wedge of cheese, about three pounds.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed. "This cheese is like a man

Digitized by Google

fresh from the country in one respect; yet it is a long, long time since it left the farm!"

"You mean that it's green!" grinned Joe. "Never mind, it will pass muster!"

"Musty, muster, mustard," suggested Amfield. "The last would destroy the first, but we haven't any. Here we are once more—some biscuits! We can fall to, Joe, it's a feast!"

The boy, who had forgotten all his injuries, real and imaginary, seated himself at the table, and fell to with much zest. There was no exchange of observations, each was as hungry as the proverbial hunter, and they ate of the plain fare with such avidity as to seriously threaten organs of digestion that had not been in regular practice for some time.

"That was good!" asserted Joe decisively. "There's nothing to wash it down with, is there?"

"Haven't you had enough moisture to last you for a time?" queried Amfield. "By Jove—I mean, by Joe! You *were* hungry, poor little beggar!"

"I can't return the compliment properly because I didn't have time to look at you and see how you were eating!" said Joe. "I don't know that I'm so little, though!"

"You're small for a lad," responded Amfield. "I say, Joe! We are both without friends, but we needn't be so any longer. I like you; I believe you are a thorough straightforward chap down on your luck, and I've taken quite a fancy to you. We'll be friends, eh? We may be able to help one another!"

"Y-e-e-s!" hesitated the boy. "Oh, don't be offended!" he added hastily. "I should like it above all things, but—you might not!"

"Yes I should!" The tone was positive. "Now I am going to see if there is any chance of a smoke. You do not smoke? You ought not! You're too young—and just a bit too delicate. You've been starved, that's flat, otherwise you would be fatter in the arms, and look more sturdy."

He rummaged again, but did not find the desired smoke. They drew chairs to the gas fire, and prepared to enjoy it. Amfield's eyes, wandering over the room, fell upon an album on which was printed in gold letters the name James Amfield.

With an exclamation that startled his companion, he sprang up and seized the book. Turning over the portraits inside, he stopped at one and gazed sadly at it.

"That is my father's photo! Then this house belongs to my cousin, James Amfield! How strange! The man who did me out of my inheritance, and this house should belong to me!"

"What's it all about?" asked Joe mystified. "Have you seen a ghost?"

"Almost!" said Amfield, replacing the album and returning to his seat. "Joe, as we are friends, I will tell you all about it!

"My father was a man of money, but a hard, harsh man, with very little parental love. My sister, Mary, was older than I and she had set her heart on a man who hadn't money. My father forbade the marriage; my sister rebelled, and I took her part. My father turned us both out. My sister married; she sailed for Australia, and the vessel was lost. I tried to make a position for myself, with what brains I had, but I was too good-natured, got into difficulties through standing as security for false friends—and here I am!

"My cousin James was a hypocrite; he saw his chance and toadied to my father, embittering him against his children. When my father died all his money went to James Amfield.

"I wonder where James is now? This house is not occupied; perhaps he is away and a man comes in to look at the house now and then. Suppose he were to come in upon us now?"

"I should be off!" declared Joe unhesitatingly. "I think somebody must come in because this room isn't dusty. Look! Here's a letter addressed to Mr. John White. Yes, it's got a foreign stamp on it."

"New York," explained Robert Amfield. "The Glasgow post-mark is the 20th—five days ago, so somebody does come. I think I'll take a peep."

He took the letter from the torn envelope and read it. The signature was that of James Amfield, and the letter was to inform the butler and general factotum that the writer would be at home on the 25th.

"That's to-day! Why, he may be here at any moment! I wonder why there is no one here to receive him? Where are you off to, Joe?"

"I'm not fit to receive company!" was the reply, as the lad took up his coat and made for the door. "I heard a noise at the front somewhere. He may be here! Are you coming?"

"I'll stay and face him! Don't go!" But the lad was out of the room. "I haven't seen dear James lately! We hurled some lava-like language at one another through the medium of the post after my father's death, so the present meeting will be a warm affair! Well it will counteract the cold outside!"

Robert Amfield waited, but he heard nothing. It must have been a false alarm. He looked at the letter again, and saw some pencilled words on the back page. "I find that I shall not be home till four days later."

"That explains the absence of Mr. John White! I feel at home here! I am sure that cousin James, who was so good and charitable, will not grudge me a rest and food! Yes," surveying himself in the glass, "I am not neat in appearance! There ought to be a bath-room here, with shaving utensils. Perhaps another suit of clothes! I'll see!"

He moved to the door, switched off the light and made his way upstairs to the first floor, uttering his thoughts aloud and not noticing a slim figure outside the door of the room where he and Joe had made themselves comfortable.

"I'll make myself presentable. Where did that silly boy go? Upon my word, I feel quite attached to the poor beggar! Never felt so taken with anybody before. I call it mean of him to go, after swearing friendship! His were tolerably dirty, but they wouldn't have soiled mine! They were honest hands nevertheless—I am positive of that!"

"Right!" murmured the listener. "They may be sooty, but they've never been mixed in anything dirty like dishonesty! Shall I stay? I wonder if I ought?"

It was quite three-quarters of an hour before Robert Amfield descended to the room which he had mentally designated the study. In that time he had had a bath—his body was tingling all over with the effects of the vigorous towelling administered to it—and had shaved. He had turned out a tweed suit of subdued pattern, together with some clean linen and a pair of boots.

He was a changed man; a thorough gentleman in appearance and deportment. The transformation was complete, and he resembled only in the remotest degree the outcast who had penetrated without permission the deserted house in the fashionable suburb.

He pushed open the door of the well-lighted room, but stood aghast at the sight of a young woman gazing at herself in the mirror.

She was posing before her own reflection, with amusement written large on her face, and Amfield continued to stare at her in bewilderment. Here was a new development! Who was this? Had she been in the house all the time? That was hardly likely. Then had she been sent by White to dust and clean? That also was improbable, for it was late in the day to begin work, and she was not dressed for cleaning and scrubbing. She was neatly attired in a dress that must have

Google

cost a fair price at a West-end establishment, but Amfield noticed that it was not so well-fitting as it might have been.

In making another pose in order to see as much of her back as it is possible to do with one mirror, the girl caught sight of Robert's reflection in the glass, and uttered a cry. Turning hastily to him, she asked, in confusion :

"Are you Mr. Amfield ? I thought that you would not be here just yet, although your letter said so. I was thinking that I should see—— Never mind ! I hope I am not intruding ?"

"She mistakes me for my cousin James !" thought the transformed tramp. Aloud, he said evasively : "I *am* Mr. Amfield ! May I ask to whom I am indebted for the honour of this visit ?"

"Oh, dear !" cried the girl. "How formal ! Well, I'm—er—my name is—Mary Amfield !"

"What do you mean ?" demanded Robert sternly.

Who was this, taking the name of his dead sister ? He had no time to demand further explanation, for the bell of the front-door rang violently.

"Stay where you are !" commanded Robert. "Don't move till I see who it is !"

The girl, who had recovered her composure to some extent, bowed defiantly, and Robert went to the front-door and shot back the two bolts. A rush of wind and snow followed the opening of the door, and Robert heard a boy's voice :

"Telegram ! White ! Is that here ?"

"Yes," answered Amfield mechanically.

"Here you are, then !" pushing it into his hand.

Returned to the light and warmth, Robert Amfield deliberately slit the envelope with his finger and read the telegram.

"James Amfield died here yesterday. Last words that his property goes to cousin Robert. Try find him."

The cablegram was from New York, where, it was to be conjectured, James had been on business ; he had died after a very brief illness, and on his death-bed his conscience had smitten him.

Perhaps he had already made a will in England, leaving the property to Robert ? It mattered little ; for, if there were no will, the attested death-bed statement would be accepted as a legal bequest. He, Robert Amfield, the outcast, was rich ; he had entered into his own again !

"You're a cheat, a fraud !" cried the girl, bending over him and shaking her fist at him. "You're not James Amfield, and you've killed the man who was here an hour ago, swearing friendship to a girl who never had a friend in her life. He told me he would be a friend, and I heard him say that he liked me, as he went upstairs ! What have you done with him ?"

"What ! Are you Joe ? Well, I——" Robert could not continue for a second, his amazement was too great. "So you are transformed, like me, only more so ! Don't you know me now that I have had a wash and a brush up ?"

"Oh !" cried the girl, shrinking away. "It *is* you ! I see now ! I was so confused when I thought you were your cousin come home that I didn't recognise you, and I gave you the name of your sister, because that was the first that came to me !"

"Why did you masquerade in boy's clothes ?"

"Mine were so torn and ragged and I got frightened. I couldn't get a place as a servant, and no one would believe I was honest. I got into a suit of boy's clothes and did all sorts of jobs, and so I got a sort of a living where a girl would have starved."

"You shall be poor no longer, young lady !" declared Robert, rising and taking her by the shoulders. "Look at me, Joe—or Josephine ! I said we would be friends, and so we shall, for now that I am well-off, it is my fixed intention to endow thee, my dear Joesphine, with exactly one-half of all my worldly goods ! Do you understand ?"

Apparently she did, for she blushed.

"And to seal the contract," concluded Robert Amfield exultantly, "I claim a loving kiss !"

G. Merriam.

Your Editor Chats.

The fifth list of sentences in the competition to discover buried names of railway stations will be found on page 527. Five more lists of sentences—making ten in all—will appear.

I receive daily a large number of letters from readers, asking me to clear up certain points in connection with the competition on which they are in doubt. There would be no doubtful points were competitors to read the rules carefully. No information regarding the competition will be sent privately ; any point likely to be of general interest to competitors will be dealt with in the paper.

Below are some questions asked this week, together with my replies :—

Question : If a part of a word forms the name of one railway station and the whole word forms another, may I put both down ?

Answer : If you will carefully read the conditions of the competition, you will see that it says that "no word or part of a word may be used more than once in making up the name of a railway station."

Question : Are the sounds of the words in the sentence to be taken only as they would be read, or may they be taken according to the way in which parts of the words might conceivably be pronounced ?

Answer : They must be taken as the word would be read.

Question : May I pick out words or parts of words from any portion of a sentence, and put them together so as to form the name of a railway station ?

Answer : No ; it is clearly stated in the rules that words or parts of words taken together to form the names of railway stations *must be consecutive*.

Question : If the name of a railway station occurs several times in a sentence, must I underline and write it down each time ?

Answer : Yes. This is distinctly stated in the rules of the competition.

The cover this week is a reproduction of the Bruce Tartan. This is the ninth tartan which has appeared as the wrapper of Short Stories. A list of the others, together with the dates of their appearance, will be found on page 517.

I don't want my readers to forget that there is such a thing as the Fresh Air Fund, and each week during the Spring and Summer I shall give them a reminder of its existence. For the small sum of ninepence, one child, who has lived amidst bricks and mortar all its life, and probably never seen grass and trees except in one of the parks of their city, can have a whole day in the country, with plenty to eat and drink. Think what this means to a child—how it will enjoy the freedom and freshness of the pure air, and the joy it will have in being where there is no notice to "keep off the grass," and where it may actually gather buttercups and daisies to its heart's content.

£8 2s. provides for a party of 200 children with the necessary attendants. Donations of whatever size will be gratefully received and acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*. They should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Fresh Air Fund, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., who will forward collecting sheets on application.

Your Editor.

Digitized by Google

A GAME OF CHAFF.

The Tale of a Rich Girl's Wooing.

THE great house loomed darkly before the young man who paused for a moment at the iron gates. Then he stepped forward briskly and passing round the mansion rang the bell at the side door. It was almost immediately answered by a young woman who put her finger to her lips as she ushered him in.

"Please be very careful," she said. "The family is so fussy. Come this way."

She took him into an apartment that might have been the breakfast room, and motioned him towards a chair.

"Can't I shake hands with you?" he asked. "It seems like quite an age since we parted."

"Thank you," she said, and gave him her hand. "It was just two weeks ago to-day—if that can be considered an age."

"Thank you for remembering the day," he gravely said.

"I will admit," said the girl, with a little blush, "that it was quite an episode in my life. I'd never had such an opportunity before."

"No?" he said, with a slightly rising inflection. He looked at her with a curious expression. She was a pretty girl, a very pretty girl, and though her hair was smoothed into plainness and surmounted by a simple little white cap, its beauty and lustre seemed brightened by this attempt at concealment. Her gown was plain, too, and over it she wore a fresh white apron.

"Yes," she said, and her inflection took the opposite direction. And she in turn looked at him. He was a man worth looking at. Well knit, well featured, and well spoken. "Some men," she shortly added, "are easily deceived."

"Some deceptions are preferable to the truth," he said. "But pray go on—you have something to tell me."

"Yes," said the girl. "No doubt you have guessed it. You saw me at the seaside for those few days. The glamour of the place dazed you. You took appearances for realities."

"They were such charming appearances," he softly said.

"Please don't interrupt," she cried with another little blush. "You saw me with Miss Ainslie's aunt. You took me for Miss Ainslie—and I let you deceive yourself. I was only the dear old lady's companion. I am only Miss Ainslie's companion. One moment. Miss Ainslie showed me your note asking the privilege of calling. She suspected I knew what it meant. I confessed. I told her the whole story—how I let you think me a great heiress and how I led you on. She advised me to write and tell you to call——"

"At the side door," said the man.

"Of course at the side door," exclaimed the girl. "I couldn't ask you here on the footing of the family guests. I wouldn't have asked you here at all, but Miss Ainslie advised it. She said it was my duty to undeceive you. That is all, I think. Good night."

She stood up as she spoke the last words and moved towards the door. But the man did not stir.

"The evening is young yet," he said, "and short calls disagree with me. Pray sit down. I, too, came here this evening to make confession. I was not the only one deceived."

"What do you mean?" she asked, as she resumed her chair.

"I mean," he replied, "that I represented myself to you in what you must have regarded as a rather favourable light."

"I think," she said, "that you gave me the impression that you were a person of some importance."

There was a silence.

"I fancy there must be something in the air of the average watering-places that encourages these fanciful deceptions," he said. "We seem to long to be something other than what we really are. And yet I am very glad to-night to know the truth."

"May I ask why?" said the girl.

"I was about to tell you," he replied. "You see, that as the petted heiress, Grace Ainslie, you seemed as far above me as a star. I was mad to write to you to-day. But now it's different. You are nearer my social level. I do not have to storm the bastion of wealth to reach you."

"That's rather pretty," said the girl. "And you are not disappointed?"

"No," said the man, "I am glad."

"Glad that I am a dependent instead of an heiress?"

"Glad for my own sake, yes. And now may I ask your name?"

"M-my name?" stammered the girl. "Why should I tell you?"

"Do as you please about it," said the man. "It will be easy to give you another."

"And may I ask what yours is?" queried the girl demurely.

"A truce to names," he said. "They count for nothing to-night."

"And yet I'm foolishly particular regarding them," she said, with a smile.

"You are thinking of the possible change," he thoughtfully remarked. "I don't blame you for being a little fastidious. It does you credit. You wouldn't fancy a name like Hoopenlooper, would you?"

"No," she gravely answered. "I wouldn't like any name that ran over the edge of a calling card."

"But, after all," he cried, "it is the man, not the name."

"Then," she said, "you leave me to infer that your name is an atrocious one."

"My name is all right," he said. "But let it go. There are other things to hold our attention. In the first place, how do we stand socially and financially? Wait, please. I am about to tell you something concerning myself."

"Not the story of your life!"

"Not exactly. But pray do not interrupt. I am thirty-

Digitized by Google

one, in good health, no serious habits, fairly good-looking, measurably ambitious and something of a favourite where I am best known. I have a comfortable situation in connection with a city office, and there is a neat little sum lying to my credit in a certain bank. I think I might even compass the cost of a modern suburban villa."

"That's nice," she said. "I have a little balance on a bank book myself."

"That's nice, too," said the man. "Do you think it would cover the cost of the furniture?"

"If carefully invested," said the girl, "I think it would."

"I'm glad of that," the man commented. "I never believe in adopting the instalment plan where you can raise the cash. And now be equally frank and tell me about yourself."

"No," said the girl, "I'm too much prejudiced in favour of the subject. Let's hear your opinion."

"All right," said the man, "but, of course, I'm prejudiced, too. At the same time it is a good thing to air one's prejudices occasionally. If our prejudices do not agree pray correct me from time to time.

"To begin with, you are beautiful. Then you are fairly intelligent. You have a nimble wit, but you have been somewhat spoilt. Eh, you don't like that? Nevertheless, it is quite evident that your employers have been too indulgent. Oh, yes they have. And yet one who really—admired you, could overlook this—shall I say painful—defect, in time."

"Is that all?"

"All! I could dilate on your attractions until the grey fingers of the dawn beckoned me away."

"How nicely you express yourself. I had only to shut my eyes to hear the surf beating on the shore and the band softly thrumming on the hotel verandah."

"What a lovely time we had—while it lasted. How those golden moments scuttled through pleasure's hour-glass!"

"There you go again. But we did have a lovely time deceiving each other, didn't we?"

"It was our foolish vanity that did the deceiving—our hearts were as true as steel."

"Steel is very hard, Mr. Thingamy."

"Mine is ductile steel, Miss Whatsyourname. 'Tis a heart of wax when thou art near. And your face is the only impression it bears."

"But, ah, if your heart warmed up unduly that impression would soon be obliterated."

"No, no, it is indelible. Ah, if I only knew your name how delightful it would be to make love to you."

The girl made a quick gesture of dissent.

"You would take altogether too much time," she said. "I shudder to think of your verbosity if you had a three-syllable name to encourage your efforts. Besides, you must remember that this is my night in."

"Your night in?"

"Yes, it's my night to have company and to receive it—or him—in this particular apartment. All the other servants go out in order to leave the lucky one a clear field. My chance doesn't come again for ten days. But that will not excuse me for overdoing the present opportunity. You really must go. I fancy I hear footsteps now. Hush!"

The footsteps came down the hall. They paused and the door opened. An elderly man with a heavy white moustache looked in.

"Oh, there you are, Grace!" he cried. "Excuse me, I didn't know you had company. Bless my soul, if it isn't Warren Hayes! How are you, my boy? I didn't know Grace knew you. Helping her with private theatricals, I see. Don't let her work you too hard. There, there, I won't interrupt any longer. Glad to see you at any time, my boy."

"I'll drop in on you at the office in the morning," said Warren Hayes. "I have a little important business I want to see you about."

"All right, my boy. Any time after ten. Good night."

"Good night."

There was a short silence. The man looked at the girl. The girl looked at the floor.

"I was silently admiring the way your father says Grace," remarked Warren Hayes.

"Come," said the girl sharply, "what is that special business you have with papa to-morrow morning."

"And here I've been openly crediting you with unusual cleverness," said Warren Hayes, with a despairing gesture. "Yet I fancy you half suspect. The fact is, Miss Grace Ainslie, alias Whatsyourname, that when a young woman admits her devoted admirer through the side door it is about time for papa's consent to be asked."

"You are a rude and nasty man," said the girl. "And I suppose you are just conceited enough to fancy that you will succeed with the father as well as—I mean that you hope to succeed with the daughter as well as you think you'll succeed with the father."

"Exactly," said Warren Hayes.

The girl looked at him with a little scowl.

"Well," she said, "you'll not get in the side door again."

"Oh, the front door will do," said Warren Hayes.

And then the girl softly laughed.

Amy Richards.

"I HEAR that Miss Woody is inconsolable over the loss of poor little Fido." "Yes, poor thing. Every time it rains cats and dogs she rushes to the window to see if he is among them."

LITTLE GIRL: "Ma, that man on a bicycle knocked me down and made me break the glass jug." Mother: "Well, break the pieces up and throw them out where he'll run over them and puncture his tyres as he comes back."

"How is the razor, sir?" asked the barber. "Didn't know I was being shaved," said the victim. "Very glad, I'm sure, sir," began the barber, feeling flattered. But the victim cut him short: "I thought I was being sandpapered."

Important to Those About to Marry and others.

Small Homes and How to Furnish Them.

By Mrs. Waldemar Leverton.

With 16 Illustrations, cloth, price 1s., or post free for 1s. 2d.

CONTENTS:

Choosing the Home—The Furniture—Wall Papers—Floor Coverings—On Colouring, etc.—Red Rooms—Green Rooms—Blue Rooms—Yellow Rooms—Pink Rooms—The Entrance Hall—Staircase Nooks—Cosy Sitting Rooms—The Dining Room—The Kitchen—The Scullery—The Bed Rooms—A Girl's Bed-Sitting Room—A Bachelor's Room—Nurseries and Schoolrooms—Beautifying the Bath Room—Wall Decoration—The Use and Abuse of Drapery—Piano Decoration, etc., etc.

At all Booksellers; or of the Book Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, W.C.

ORDER FORM. S.S.

To the BOOK PUBLISHER,
17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Please forward me a copy of "SMALL HOMES," for which I inclose the sum of one shilling and twopence.

Name.....

Address .....

.....

Digitized by Google

NEW SERIAL.

Held Apart

The Story of a Strange Double Fraud and its Influence upon some Young Hearts, a Great Name, and a Famous Fortune.

By R. NORMAN SILVER.

Author of "The Golden Dwarf," "A Daughter of Mystery," etc.

SOME INTERESTING PEOPLE.

John Davenal. A diver.
Hannah Davenal. His sister, maid to Lady Tarleton.
Moira. Supposed to be the diver's daughter.
Sir Guy Vanbrugh. Moira's lover.
Adeline, Lady Tarleton. His aunt.
Irene Tarleton. Her daughter.
Edward Stormont. Lady Tarleton's brother-in-law.
Paul Jerome. His friend, a war-correspondent and journalist, in love with Irene.
Dennis Hartigan. A ship's steward, and husband of Hannah.
"Kit" Hartigan. His sister, a blind girl.
Detective-Sergt. Ussher. Of Scotland Yard.

NINETEENTH CHAPTER.
What Dennis Hartigan Heard.

A MURMUR passed through the group of listeners round the fire of the bar-parlour, a murmur of surprise and doubt. The old fisherman knocked the ashes out of his black "cutty."

"Believe it or not, as you like," he said, and at the table in the distant corner Dennis Hartigan strained his ears to catch the words. "I saw her, and I ought to know Mollie Davenal. Why, it was my missis did everything for her when John Davenal brought the little lass to Groudle after his wife died. Not that it's the first time Mollie has been under water, there's some of you here knows of one other time."

"Aye," agreed a member of the meditative party, "I can speak for that, for John Davenal was chaffed about it, and told us the lass had wheedled him into letting her have a dip in the suit. But what for would she go down with him lying at death's door?"

"We've no proof she did," commented a neighbour drily. "Maybe the gentleman from the Tower was over free with the spirits for John Thomas. He's told us already he had his fill of as good whisky as man need wish for."

There was a chuckle of mirth from the stolid revellers, but the old fisherman smote his huge fist on his knee.

"Now if it was to be my last word on earth," he retorted, "yon was Moira Davenal, and there's an end of it." And he began irritably to refill his pipe.

Dennis Hartigan lifted his glass to his lips, and drank a mouthful. His lips trembled slightly, and the glass jarred against his teeth. He set it down, and affected to busy himself with his meal. But under his drooped eyelids his gaze was fixed on the gossipers. They were pondering, with North country phlegm, the emphatic statement of their grizzled companion.

The opening of the bar-parlour door broke in upon their silence. A lean, brown-skinned, black-bearded fellow, with twinkling eyes, and a certain gruff shyness in his bearing, entered the apartment. He had a sou'-wester on the back of his head, and his garments were a jersey, a rough jacket, and blue trousers tucked into the tops of his sea-boots. At his appearance the fisherman started up.

"Here's a man as will go bail I'm telling the truth," he said; "Peter Travis, you was on a diving job off the breakwater this afternoon. Who was your diver?"

The newcomer removed his sou'-wester, and looked into it.

"Oh, a green hand," he answered. "Just a bit of practice, John Thomas—I—I wanted him to see the place where the *Sylph* had laid, and to give him a notion what working in five fathoms was like."

"John Thomas" put the shiny black cutty into his vest-pocket, and stepped towards the diver's assistant. A smile had gone round the semi-circle of listeners. Yet it had found no reflection on the sombre features of Dennis Hartigan.

"Peter Travis," said the person challenged by the smile, "you're a perverter of the truth. Your "green hand" was Mollie Davenal. I saw her with my own eyes as you took off the helmet. And Mr. Jerome, a gentleman from the Tower, as I was finding a day's fishing for, saw her, too."

Mr. Travis plucked at his coarsely-pointed black beard.

"Pity but there hadn't been two gentlemen of you, John Thomas," he observed scathingly, "then you'd have held your tongue. The lass was but doing as her father wished her."

Digitized by Google

"Her father." The exclamation had broken from more than one of the listeners.

"Aye," said Peter Travis, "her father. He'd a notion in his sickness he'd lost something down there—something he'd only trust her to look for, and because she wanted to ease his mind, and give him a chance of pulling through, she persuaded me to let her go down. And a brave lass she is, and fitter to be John Davenal's daughter than to be spied on by such as you, John Thomas."

With much crushing, if involved rebuke, Mr. Travis strolled to a seat and deposited himself in it. The old fisherman had coloured a deep brick-red.

"I'm—I'm sure I meant no harm, Peter Travis," he said. "I—I only spoke of the thing as it happened."

"You couldn't," declared Mr. Peter Travis, cutting himself a half-inch length of Irish twist. "For that was just what you didn't know!"

The retort was too much for the delinquent, and he collapsed into silence, while Peter Travis stroked his beard with an air of triumph.

"And—and was there anything there?" queried an irrepressible. The diver's assistant sniffed disdainfully.

"How could there be?" he said. "The whole thing was naught but a sick man's fancy. But the lass was above telling John a lie to satisfy him, so, as she'd been down once before in a sort of joke, I let her put on the suit and do as she wished. With the wind in the south, the spot is no more than a big pool for smoothness. And the bottom's clear enough now the yacht is up."

A murmur of intelligent approval greeted the final instalment of Mr. Travis's explanation, and the talk drifted upon other topics.

Assured that there was no more to hear, Dennis Hartigan got up slowly from his table and lounged, with conspicuous indifference, out of the room. From the bar of the Half Brick he passed forth into the night, and went along the lightless road.

In a darker angle than ever of the lonely thoroughfare, the ex-steward arrested his steps, and some fierce syllables spat themselves from his clenched jaw.

"Kit!" he said, "Kit—it can only be Kit!"

He flung himself down in the thick undergrowth of the tall hedgerow, and put his chin in his palms. A whistle shrieked far off, and the red of the railway-signal in sight along the descending lane changed to green. A moment more and an express shot by, to whisk past the level crossing, and vanish into the obscurity beyond.

Dennis Hartigan snarled viciously.

"Why did that fool interfere?" he growled to himself. "My rotten luck all over! I don't suppose she'd spoken then, she said she hadn't. And now—now they're on the track, or why—why does John Davenal send Moira down to look for—for *it?*"

The ex-steward shook his head.

"But how did they guess that what Kit heard had anything to do with—with Moira?" he muttered aloud. "Kit didn't know anything to suggest that. There must be someone else at work."

He shook his head again as he sat in the dark of the hedgerow, and kept on shaking it occasionally in a sullen, futile reverie. The moon emerged from the clouds above to look at him—her light was too vivid for his liking, and he rose, to wander down the lane. As her wan radiance touched him between chance gaps in the irregular banks that fringed the road, it might have been seen that he was walking without haste, almost without attention to the route he followed.

Wrapped in his own thoughts, the ex-steward went on through the night, a dusky, powerful figure. When, after a long detour, he reached the sea-front, there was no whit of decision in his lowering, anxious visage. It was late for Groudle; the clocks were striking the half hour after ten as he moved athwart the deserted wharves and came to Hawthorn Cottage.

The ex-steward halted and surveyed it. A light burnt in

(*Continued overleaf.*)

A Remarkable Letter.

The Lady Typist and Bile Beans.

The following letter, written by a London lady typist to the proprietors of Chas. Forde's Bile Beans, will interest many of our readers. It shows how effective Bile Beans are in cases of headache, dizziness, morning sickness, and general debility:—

"38 Moncrieff Street,
Peckham, S.E.

Gentlemen,

It gives me much pleasure to send you an account of the benefits I have derived from Chas. Forde's Bile Beans.

Three years ago I was engaged as a lady clerk in the office of a City firm, and had to be at my work by 8.30 every morning. This meant having to catch an early train to the City in all weathers, sitting in a stuffy office all day, taking food irregularly, and reaching home again late every evening to such comforts as one can get in lodgings.

One morning I awoke with a violent headache, a thing almost unknown to me previously, but I found it had come to stay! For the next three months it scarcely ceased! Then there came a nasty sickness in the morning, followed by dizziness, and, occasionally, fainting during the day. I attended the Women's Hospital for months, after having advice from three doctors. Yet, though at first I benefited by the treatment, I soon went from bad to worse again. My friends told me I looked like death, and I think I gave up all hope, for I was almost a skeleton, and the pain in my side, due no doubt to liver complaint, was like knives going through me!

After trying everything I could get, and doctor's medicine and hospital treatment so long, with so poor result, I adopted a friend's advice—gave up everything else, and tried what Bile Beans could do for me.

They did wonders! Before the third box was finished I was like a new woman. In two months they cured me, whereas doctors had failed to do so in two years. I am writing this letter almost a year after my cure, and during that time I have had no recurrence of my old symptoms. So there is no question as to the permanency of my cure.

Yours truly,
(Signed) A. CAMPBELL."

The same Bile Beans as did so much for Miss Campbell may be applied to your case. They are obtainable from all chemists at 1/1½ or 2/9 per box. Many people are of the opinion that Bile Beans are an ordinary medicine. They are not. They are the product of the latest scientific research, and have been obtainable only within the last few years. They do not merely purge and give temporary relief, like the old-fashioned remedies of forty or fifty years ago. They act directly on the liver and digestive organs, strengthening and stimulating them to do their own work, so that further medicine taking becomes unnecessary. They are purely vegetable. They contain no harmful drugs, and they are the finest family medicine obtainable.

REAL DEVONSHIRE CREAM

(CLOTTED); absolutely pure; no preservatives used; the most efficacious substitute for cod liver oil; invaluable for children and invalids; ½lb. 1s. 4d.; 1lb. 2s. 4d.; 2lbs. 4s. 4d., free. Supplied constantly to the Countesses Cadogan, Pembroke, Sefton, Dundonald, Guilford, Lichfield, etc., by **MRS. CONYERS, Morchard Bishop, Devon.**

Digitized by Google

but one of its windows—that of the wounded man's room. The rest of the cottage was in darkness, and seemed to share the sleep of the sleeping town.

Dennis Hartigan climbed the fence at a sheltered corner, and, keeping in the shadows of the garden, made a curious little tour of inspection. As he prowled this way and that around the silent dwelling, his half-seen form had a skulking, wolf-like air.

Presently he darted into the shadow of the house itself, gained the small porch, and tried the door. It was unlocked, he stepped noiselessly into the tiny, darkened hall, closed the door behind him, and crept towards the stairs.

Suddenly he halted.

"No," he said, in a whisper, "not to-night, it would be all over the place to-morrow, and I should lose Lady T.'s three thousand pounds. I've got to tell her where the child is, and what she is, a nice fool I should look with the girl dead already. The old cat would strike a cheaper bargain, or bluff me out of it altogether."

He retraced his steps and stole out into the garden. By way of precaution, he crossed it to scale the fence at a different point. As he peered about for something to mount by, the murmur of voices reached him, and he shrank into the bushes about the small summer-house. The voices came from its interior, and one of them was Moira's. The other, though the ex-steward could not know it, was Sir Guy Vanbrugh's.

Hartigan's pulses, still thrilling with the alarm that had seized upon his guilty spirit at the sound of human speech so close to him, beat to a sterner and more ferocious measure.

Within an arm's length of him, unsuspecting, yet not alone, was the girl whose life he was pledged to take, the girl who had become, if he could interpret aright the story he had heard at the Half Brick, not only his destined victim, but a dangerous antagonist. To whom was she speaking, and, above all, what was she saying?

Dennis Hartigan listened breathlessly. Moira's voice was low and tender, her words significant.

"And you don't mind a wife who doesn't know her own name," she asked, "or who her father and mother were?"

"My dearest little woman," was the answer, "I don't want to marry a birth-certificate. You know at least that your Christian name is Moira, I will give you a surname, and when you are Moira Vanbrugh, what will it matter who you were before?"

There was a pause, and Dennis Hartigan's ear caught a faint something that might have been the vague echo of a long-drawn kiss. The listener ground his teeth.

"But father said," pursued Moira, "that is, Mr. Davenal said, he wished he knew because he would be glad to think that the man who called himself so wasn't really my father, for he was a blackguard and a wastrel. That means that I may not be—probably am not—quite respectable, dear. And what would people think if some shocking person or other turned up and claimed to be Sir Guy Vanbrugh's father-in-law?"

A sharp inspiration stole between Dennis Hartigan's lips. But it was lost in the sighing of the bushes about him. Guy Vanbrugh laughed.

"I will deal with any such person when he arrives, my darling," Moira was assured; "perhaps when Mr. Davenal has told us all there is to tell, we shall not find the matter quite so puzzling as it is at present. But, meanwhile, Moira, I want you to promise me something. You will, won't you?"

"How can I till I know what it is?" asked Moira rallyingly.

"How can you say," demanded Guy Vanbrugh, "that you love me if you do not even trust me sufficiently to venture on a promise without an elaborate explanation?"

"Well, then," replied Moira, penitent, "suppose that I have promised, may I not learn to what I have bound myself?"

"Not to do any more diving," said her lover gravely. "Moira, you are very courageous, and so I won't speak to you of the danger to yourself. But I can't run the risk of losing you, my darling—you are the best thing Fate ever put within my reach, and I want you to be mine—my very own—some day.

"I am a sad coward. I fear, but all the time I am away from you I experience a wild desire to jump on a swift horse and gallop over to see if any harm has befallen you. Promise me, dear, freely and openly, that you won't put yourself in danger any more."

"I—I promise, Guy dear!" murmured Moira. "I—I believe I was a little frightened myself down there. But I was so confused and so disappointed at finding nothing that I hadn't much room to be frightened. Oh, what time was that?"

The last strokes of the third quarter after ten—chimed from the spire of Groudle Church—were dying away upon the air. Moira's companion leant out of the summer-house to hold his watch in the moonbeams; the ex-steward pressed closer into the shadow.

"A quarter to eleven," said Guy Vanbrugh. Moira sprang up.

"I must go in, Guy!" she exclaimed. "Kit is only a light sleeper and she might wake—we sleep together, you know. She was such a time going off to-night, poor child, and I wondered what you would think of me, writing to you to meet me, then keeping you waiting."

Her tones were muffled again, as though she had been clasped in her lover's arms.

"You could not have pleased me better," said Guy Vanbrugh, "than by such a Romeo and Juliet appointment. Night, the moon, my darling, love and mystery, what more could a man ask?"

"I wish you had a nicer Juliet," added Moira; and once more her utterance was smothered as though by a protesting embrace.

"And now I must go," she said. "I have left the door on the latch."

"Well, if you must," yielded her lover—"good-night; and may the sweetest of sweet dreams hover about your dear little head!"

Another momentary pause brought a sneer to the unseen face of the ex-steward; and, Moira, slipping out of the summer-house, glided to the cottage.

Guy Vanbrugh followed her a pace or two, and halting, watched till she had entered, and he heard the click of the key and the latch on the other side. Still he waited. At last a curtain was lifted at an upper window. Guy Vanbrugh kissed his hand, sighed pleasurably, and turned to go.

The ex-steward rose from his cramped position and imitated the younger man's example. Once he was safely out of earshot, and on the way back to the Half Brick, he stopped and chuckled. Then, without a word, he returned to his lodging at the inn on the Groudle Road.

TWENTIETH CHAPTER.
"What are you Going to Do?"

"Oh, Guy, how beautiful! Why, it is a perfect picture!"

Irene Tarleton had flung over the back of the oaken settle in the hall of the Tower a great square of dead-leaf silk, across whose wide expanse spread a trail of briar-rose, worked in delicately-tinted ribbon and scarcely less delicately-hued threads. It represented the completion of the task at which Moira Davenal had worked for so long. In the dark old place, and lit by a few chance rays of sunshine from the high mullioned windows, the mimic flowers gave to the beholder an impression of fragile, scented life.

"I'm glad you like it," said Guy Vanbrugh, surveying the splendid panel with a kind of tender reverence; "it isn't all of my present, but I think it's the prettiest part. The other parts are in London, where I expected you'd be when your birthday came round. They are a little cottage Broadwood

(*Continued on page 539.*)

Google

ALFOSCO REGD

Call or Write.

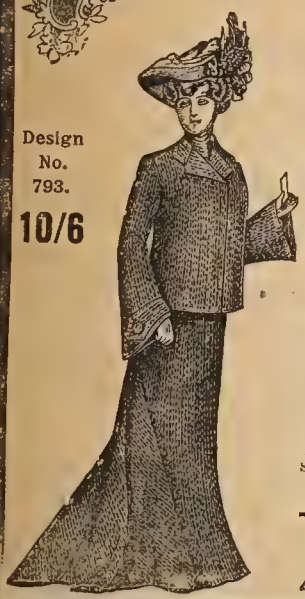
Allen Foster & Co

THE LONDON MANUFACTURERS

47 GOLDEN LANE, LONDON, E.C.

BUY DIRECT BY PARCEL POST FROM THE LEADING FIRM OF LONDON MANUFACTURERS.

Design No. 793. 10/6



Design No. 793. 10/6

Design No. 793. 10/6.

The Fashionable Coat and Skirt for Spring and Summer Wear. It has a short full Sacque Coat, single breasted, bell sleeves. The Skirt is a good shape and carefully made. Produced in ALLEN FOSTER & Co.'s new **Zibeline Cloth,** also in their celebrated **Specialite Serge** or **Venetian Cloth.** Colours: Black, Green, Light and Dark Grey, Royal, Fawn, Brown, Red, and Navy. Patterns post free. This excellent Costume complete, only **10/6**; carriage 6d., or Skirt alone, **5/6**; carriage 5d. If lined throughout the price will be **16/6**; carriage 6d. A Bargain.

Design No. 1019 4/11

Design No. 1019. 4/11

Design No. 1019. 4/11.

Costume Skirt in good-wearing Black and Navy **Serge,** trimmed two flounces and braid; lined throughout linenette. Price only **4/11,** carriage 5d. In ordering, give length of skirt in front and size of waist. Post orders receive prompt attention.

Design No 899. 10/6.

New Style. Costume with tight-fitting back, pouch front, made in A. F. & Co.'s new **Zibeline Cloth,** also in their **Specialite Serge** and **Venetian Cloth.** Colours: Navy, Royal, Green, Oxford, Fawn, Brown, Purple, Light Grey, Dark Grey, Black, &c. Stylish Costume with bell sleeves, tastefully trimmed fancy braid. Bell-shaped Skirt. Wonderful value for **10/6.** Sent carriage paid. 6d. ex. Skirt alone, only **5/6**; carriage 5d. This Costume may be ordered in the fashionable "**Alfosco**" Tweed, trimmed glacé silk instead of braid, price **21/-.**

Call or Write

ALFOSCO REGD

Design No. 899. 10/6

Send Post-card for **PATTERNS AND NEW SKETCH BOOK OF SPRING FASHIONS IN COSTUMES AND JACKETS.** FREE ON APPLICATION. CALL OR WRITE.

ALLEN FOSTER & CO.,

THE LONDON MANUFACTURERS,

47 GOLDEN LANE, BARBICAN, LONDON, E.C.

DO YOU WANT A GOOD CYCLE?

Write for my Lists. I deal only in the **Best Coventry made Cycles,** and by contracting for thousands annually, I **BUY CHEAPLY** and **SELL CHEAPLY.**

Premiers, Rovers Coventry Challenge, Triumphs, Swifts, Humbers, Centaurs, Raglans, Singers, etc.

The QUALITY is there. Get my prices, save money and ensure satisfaction.

A High-Grade **COVENTRY CYCLE** for **£6 0 0.**

Two Years' Guarantee. Easy Payments without publicity. Cycle sent on receipt of first payment. **EDWARD O'BRIEN,** The World's Largest Cycle Dealer, **COVENTRY.**

REMEMBER THE BLACK BEETLES.

TELL YOUR COOK

To well sprinkle the floor near the fireplace and kitchen cupboard last thing at night with

"KEATING'S POWDER,"

unrivalled killer of Fleas, Beetles, Moths. (Harmless to animals.) Sold everywhere, ONLY in tins, 3d., 6d. and 1s. each.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

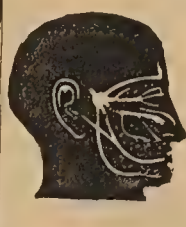
Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.,** Sole Proprietor, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Countess Furstenberg, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

ZOX for Neuralgia at Any Time.

GIVES INSTANT RELIEF TO HEADACHE, TOOTHACHE, NERVE PAINS

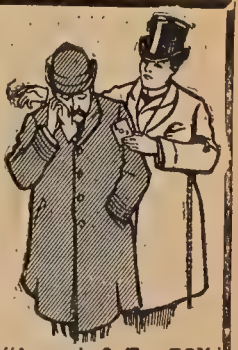


Any Sufferer Sending Stamped Addressed Envelope May Try Zox FREE.

Neuralgia is a Disease of the Nerves, and most commonly attacks the nerves of the face. Its presence is announced by the most piercing darting pains, recurring in paroxysms, followed with brief intervals of relief; but hardly a moment elapses after a lacerating pain darts along the course of the affected nerve ere another shoots forth, inflicting pain equally distressing to the patient. The annexed cut presents in the prominent lines the nerves of the fifth branch, which are most liable to attacks of Neuralgia. All who suffer from this terrible pain, or from Headache, Toothache, or nerve pains generally, will be glad to know of ZOX, a Simple, Safe and easy Remedy certified free from injurious substance by no less an authority than Dr. A. B. Griffiths, F.R.S. The Proprietors offer to send Two Free Sample Powders to any reader of "Short Stories," who will send them a stamped addressed envelope.

ZOX is sold by Chemists, &c., at 1s. and 2s 6d. per box, or can be had post free from

THE ZOX COMPANY, 11 Hatton Garden, London, E.C.



"In pain? Try ZOX."

HE CURES THE SICK.

Makes the Lame Walk and Performs Modern Miracles Which Astound and Mystify the Doctors.

"I Want the Sick to Write Me," says the Great Healer.

Tell the People My Services Are Free, So are the Services of My 20 Eminent Specialists.

Tell Them They Can Be Cured At Home: That I Am Giving My Great Discovery To the World, That All May Be Well and Enjoy the True Blessings of Perfect Health.

PROF. THOS. F. ADKIN.

"My ambition in life is not money," says Prof. Adkin, the great healer, who is daily curing men and women of the very worst diseases after learned doctors have pronounced their cases hopeless. His method of treatment is somewhat mysterious, but the fact that he cures the sick when all else fails, when the doctors lose hope and science despairs, is demonstrated beyond controversy. No matter whether you have Consumption, Kidney Trouble, Rheumatism, Catarrh, Dyspepsia, or simply an ordinary cold or fever, they are all alike to Prof. Adkin. He cures them all, he cures you quickly, painlessly, permanently at your own home. He also tells you a secret method by which you may keep yourself in perfect health. Without exaggeration, it can be safely said that Prof. Adkin is the most interesting, remarkable and wonderful physician healer of the age. His only talk, his only thought is How to cure Incurables, to bring hope to the hopeless, joy, sunshine and happiness to the miserable and suffering. He is truly carrying on a grand work. He is President of one of the largest healing institutions in the world. He employs twenty eminent physicians and specialists to assist him with his work. He spends thousands of dollars every year in giving free advice and help to the sick. No matter where you live, the services of the best specialists may be yours. All you have to do is to write a letter to Prof. Adkin describing your case, and he will immediately diagnose your disease and explain the proper home treatment for your speedy recovery. This will not cost you a single cent. No money is asked for this service, none is taken. If you are sick and want to make a donation for the purpose of carrying on the work, such will be thankfully received. Prof. Adkin will also send every sick person who writes him within the next thirty days, a free copy of his wonderful new book, entitled "How to be cured and How to cure others." This book is highly endorsed by leading physicians, it contains invaluable information in regard to diseases and what to do in cases of emergency. It should be in every home. Remember it costs you nothing if you write to Prof. Adkin now.

Mrs. C. A. Brownell, of Dane, Oklahoma, writes: "I was tortured for months by terrible pains in my head, and this, together with the loss of sleep, began to affect my mind. Your treatment has done wonders for me. I sleep well nights, and those terrible pains in my head are gone. Thank God, hope has taken the place of despondency and I have a new lease of life."

Alex. Moffat, of 338 Brown Street, Rochester, N.Y., writes: "When I applied to you for treatment I was as I might say a physical wreck, suffering from pains in the chest and stomach, also poor digestion and on the verge of nervous prostration. I had tried most everything and had about given up when I tried your treatment. My pains have gone, my nerves are strong and I feel like a new man. I wish you success in your noble work."

Mr. J. N. Purdy, Purdy's, N. Y., writes: "I have been suffering from severe stricture and bladder trouble for over three years. I was given up by my physician as incurable. My urine had to be drawn from me and the scalding and burning was intense. My suffering was almost unbearable. I took advantage of your offer, and to my great astonishment I was relieved the second day. Your cures are certainly wonderful."

Mrs. M. A. Lynch, of 1522 Girard Ave., Los Angeles, Cal., writes: "Two months ago I was almost prostrated with insomnia and general debility, from which I had suffered sixteen years. I could sleep at most only two or three hours out of the twenty-four. I suffered with severe headache and neuralgia, could scarcely endure a sound. I feel like a new being. The results of Vitaopathic treatment in my case have certainly been wonderful."

If sick be sure to write Prof. Adkin at once for free help. Be sure to state the leading symptoms of your disease, how long you have been sick, etc. Your letter will be treated with the strictest confidence and receive immediate attention. Address, Prof. Thomas F. Adkin, office 580 R, Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A.

Digitized by Google

SERIAL STORY.

and one of those automatic piano-players. This screen is to go on the back of the Broadwood."

Irene gazed at him thoughtfully.

"It's awfully good of you, Guy!" she exclaimed. "I adore music and I play wretchedly. But that a mere man should think of such a detail as a piano-screen—it passes belief."

Guy Vanbrugh twisted his moustaches in embarrassment.

"To—to be honest," he said, "it wasn't I exactly. I—you see I happened to notice the young lady busy with some of this kind of thing, and I asked her if she couldn't do something for me—that is, for you. You remember you said once that you loved fancy-work, but hadn't the patience to do it. So we—that is, Miss Davenal and I—talked it over, and she suggested quite a lot of things that might be useful."

He continued hastily. Irene's expression was both puzzled and disconcerting.

"Then I remembered," he said, "about my idea of getting you a piano-player, and between us we hit on the notion of a panel for the back of the little Broadwood. She couldn't get a design the right size, so she invented this one."

"Miss—Miss Davenal!" repeated Irene; "my dear Guy, what are you talking about?"

Her cousin adjusted a cuff-link with much intentness.

"It's quite simple," he replied; "I was seeing Davenal—John Davenal, the diver, about my yacht, and his daughter was there at the time, doing something of this sort. It was she who did this."

"Miss Davenal," murmured Irene absently; "but I thought her name was Hartigan and that she was blind."

Guy Vanbrugh raised his eyebrows.

"You must be thinking of Kit," he explained; "she is no relation of the Davenals, except as it appears now that that fellow Hartigan, her brother, married Hannah Davenal, she and Kit were sisters-in-law. Davenal's own daughter is Moira; she is fair and tall, Kit is small and dark. But how did you know about the Davenals?"

"Oh," said Irene, regarding him acutely. "Jerome whisked the little blind girl out of the way of an express at the level crossing, and when I was out riding with him the next day, we passed their cottage on the quay. She was in the garden, so Jerome stopped to ask if she was any the worse. She is a quaint, childish little creature."

Her cousin smiled.

"Kit is not as young as she seems," he remarked; "that is to say, she is by no means a child. But I hadn't any idea Jerome had been playing the knight-errant, and rescuing distressed damsels. Was she in much danger?"

Irene shrugged her shoulders.

"Only standing on the crossing," she answered. "in a species of fright, with a train thundering down on her. The gates were shut, so Jerome, who happened to be on uncle Edward's old hunter, leapt them, snatched her up, and managed to whip over the further gates into the lane beyond before the express shot by. Needless to say, he didn't tell me all this, but the blind girl did."

"By Jupiter!" cried her cousin enthusiastically, "what a clever, plucky thing to do! But there, I always knew J. was one of the best. What a jump it must have been—in and out, with no room to spare, and less than half a minute to do it and avoid knocking the poor girl's brains out at the same time. It deserves the Victoria Cross."

"So I told him, Guy," said Irene Tarleton, and she fingered a corner of the silk over which Moira had toiled so arduously. She looked up and met her cousin's glance.

"Guy," she observed slowly, "I should like to see Miss Davenal and say how much I admire her wonderful talent. What is she—a precocious country girl, or a lady?"

Guy Vanbrugh pulled mechanically at his driving-glove.

"A lady," he answered, "and not one of Nature's only. Her father has had her rather highly educated. But he is devotedly attached to her, and she has the simplest and most womanly of tastes, and is contented to live in the station to which she has been accustomed."

"You said she was fair," added Irene, watching him. "Is she pretty, or only a well-behaved, flaxen-headed frump, clever with her needle and able to read Browning?"

Her cousin's mouth relaxed; his amusement was unmistakable.

"She is more than ordinarily good-looking," he said, "and her hair is not flaxen, but of the tint of a marigold. And I do not suppose she has ever opened a volume of Browning in her life—not that one can be sure, for she is too shy and unpretentious to parade her interests, in books, or in anything else."

Irene dropped the silk she was examining and took a step to her cousin's side.

"Guy," she remarked, with a ripple of mirth in her voice, "would you like me to go and make friends with this wonderful young lady?" She had laid a slight yet perceptible emphasis on the word "friends." Guy Vanbrugh trifled with his gloves.

"I'm—I'm sure she would be very glad," he said. "I—I have spoken to her of you."

Irene burst out laughing.

"You dear, transparent fellow!" she ejaculated. "Well, I'll go and see Miss Davenal, and I won't chaff her or you till you choose to take me into your confidence. I suppose she's merely taking her time—we all do!"

Guy twisted at the button of his glove.

"I mustn't say 'yes' to what you mean, Irene," he stammered, "I—I'm not quite free, yet, to talk frankly. But I should like you to know Miss Davenal, especially——"

What more he would have said must remain matter of conjecture, for he ceased abruptly. Lady Tarleton had emerged from the library hard by. When she saw the two standing in close converse by the oaken settle, her eyes lit with a swift, false smile, and she advanced towards them.

"Ah, my dear Guy!" she exclaimed, "and what brings you to the Tower? Not that it is not a great pleasure to see you, but you really have been ignoring us so shamefully, that a visit from you is quite in the nature of a surprise."

She passed round the settle to offer him her hand. Her glance fell on the silken panel, and she wrinkled her brows, struck by a suggestion of familiarity with it.

Then she remembered; she had seen just such a one at Hawthorn Cottage, during the singular interview with Guy and Moira Davenal—it had occupied a corner, stretched upon its lath frame the better to be manipulated.

Her eyes, sharper than either of her auditors, had chanced to suspect, had marked not only the nature, but the beauty of the work. But she kept her countenance, despite the recognition.

"What a lovely thing!" she said.

"Yes, isn't it?" responded Irene, with secret amusement. "Guy had it done for me. It is part of my birthday present."

"I thought perhaps Irene would be interested in one of those automatic piano-playing contrivances," supplemented Guy Vanbrugh, "so I ordered one to be sent to Portland Place, together with a little Broadwood I took a fancy to, and—and, seeing some of this work that had been done locally, I ordered a panel of it for the back of the Broadwood."

Lady Tarleton's thin lips twitched, and her false smile grew.

"How very sweet of you to remember the dear girl's birthday!" she said. "But there, I might have known you wouldn't forget such an important occasion!" And the speaker gave to the words that extravagant accentuation affected by elderly folk when they think fit to banter the sentimental preferences of the younger generation. She inspected the panel patronisingly.

"Quite creditably done," she commented, "and you are right, my dear Guy, to support local industries. Well, I must run away, I have been talking business to your uncle for an hour, and I ordered the carriage at eleven."

(*Continued overleaf.*)

Digitized by Google

She gave her hand to her nephew again, and her gaze encountered his steadily, and with a cynical, good-tempered significance.

"You ought to show Guy those wonderful curios of your uncle's, Irene," she added, "he would be most interested. They are most marvellous carvings, Guy, incredibly ugly china and jewels, and things that it is death to bring out of some extraordinary country or other your uncle managed to penetrate into. They're all set out now in the justice-room."

Irene took her cousin's arm, it tickled her to poke sly fun at her mother's matrimonial machinations.

"Come on, Guy," she said, "we'll go and look at the curiosities, like good little kiddies on a wet day!"

And, nothing loth to have an additional opportunity of probing Guy Vanbrugh's secret, she marched him off gaily, through the hall, and down the corridors that led to the justice-room.

Lady Tarleton gazed after them.

"Does Irene love him?" she muttered. "That would be a strong lever to part him and this—this village girl. In that case is Irene only flirting with this newspaper man? I wish I knew."

She sighed and turned. The silken panel, still hanging over the back of the settle, attracted her attention, and she frowned.

"Pretty, proud, and clever," she murmured. "The girl is no mean enemy. I must get Guy away if it is possible. Yet, in the alternative, I must not leave him here, with her."

Thus communing with herself, Lady Tarleton had moved towards the staircase, and was ascending it. Sweeping absent-mindedly round a curve, she brushed against someone coming down, and, glancing up, beheld Paul Jerome. He paused and apologised before passing down. Lady Tarleton re-assured him effusively, but peered at his retreating figure through her lorgnette with an evil scowl on her pale features.

"I must get rid of you," she told herself, "you, my dear Mr. Jerome, are a very unimportant, and yet a very inconvenient pawn. It should not be difficult to sweep you off the board."

Oblivious to this contemptuous epitome of his position, the war-correspondent made for the library from which Lady Tarleton had so recently emerged. As he neared the door, a footman came through from the rear of the hall, and followed him into the room.

Edward Stormont was writing at a table in the middle of the great, book-lined apartment. About the floor were strewn various packing-cases, their contents of unmounted skins, horns, native stuffs, and implements of barbaric warfare and agricultural scattered around. The explorer raised his head as his friend entered.

"Hullo, Jerome," he said. "I was wondering what had become of you. I am a lamentable host, I know, but, to tell you the truth; you seemed to have a distinct preference for feminine society, and so I——"

He stopped, seeing the footman.

"Well?" he asked.

The servant stepped forward.

"Mr. Ussher, sir," he said; "would be glad if you could spare him a moment."

Edward Stormont growled an anathema upon the detective.

"Here, Jerome," he observed, "you profess to be interested by this blundering Argus. Help me to grapple with his latest inspiration, his portentous mystery bores me horribly."

"With pleasure," assented the war-correspondent, and sat down on a corner of the big writing-table. Edward Stormont had nodded to the footman, the latter withdrew, to return promptly with Mr. Ussher. The door closed behind the detective, and he advanced into the room. Perceiving Paul Jerome, his brows contracted.

"Mr. Jerome is quite discreet, Ussher," said Edward Stormont, "and completely in my confidence. You need have no hesitation, as I expect you are aware, in taking him into yours."

"Humph!" replied the detective. "Mr. Jerome is a newspaper man, but, no doubt, under the circumstances, and as your friend, sir, he will see the necessity of forgetting entirely his professional claims, even to the extent of a vague and guarded paragraph."

"Of course!" agreed Edward Stormont curtly.

Mr. Ussher produced his notebook.

"I have approached you, sir," he said, addressing Edward Stormont, "as a more or less disinterested party in this matter, and practically on my own responsibility. But I have always had the reputation of a scrupulously tactful investigator. I wish to retain that reputation."

"Yes, yes," he was answered curtly, "we are sure of that, Ussher. But to the point, and, by the way, take a seat."

"I thank you, sir," said Mr. Ussher, acting on the invitation. "Well, sir, my position is this. Pursuing one clue and another, calculated to throw light upon the death of Hannah Davenal, I have by chance stumbled upon an important person—one of your own gamekeepers, sir, who did not, as it happens, know the deceased woman either by name or appearance."

"Good Heavens!" cried Edward Stormont, "then how can he be considered important?"

The detective tapped his finger on the back of his note-book.

"That is the crux of the whole question," he allowed. "I have been carrying about with me a portrait of the dead woman, a photograph that I got from her husband. This I showed—with intention, sir—in the Half Brick public-house, to a group in the bar.

"I was anxious to foster gossip—it is in gossip that our best clues are often found. This gamekeeper of yours, sir, was among the group, and recognised the portrait of Hannah Davenal as that of a woman he had seen in Groudle Park a night or two before the deceased was found dead in bed."

Edward Stormont bent a pen-handle till it snapped.

"But the point, Ussher, the point," he said, irritably. The war-correspondent intervened.

"There is no doubt some reason, Mr. Ussher," he added, "why you come to Mr. Stormont about the matter. You need not, as we understand, report to him at all in the case."

The detective bent his head in solemn approval.

"You are perfectly correct, Mr. Jerome," he conceded, "but I have not fully explained. Taking your man aside, Mr. Stormont, and chatting with him persuasively, I asked him at length why he had not followed the woman, or spoken to her. His answer was that they—she had a companion, a woman closely cloaked and muffled—seemed to wish to avoid observation. Ordinarily, that would, of course, only have led him to be increasingly vigilant. But——"

Mr. Ussher halted, put a thumb in his note-book, and rested the volume on his knee.

"But," he proceeded, "there was something about Davenal's companion that, he hinted, gave him good grounds for—for discretion. She—she was, as he put it, after some considerable persuasion, and a certain amount of liquid refreshment, the 'dead spit'—which, oddly enough, sir, means in these parts, the living image—of your sister-in-law, Mr. Stormont, Lady Tarleton."

"Lady Tarleton!" repeated the master of Groudle Tower. "My sister-in-law—well, and what if it were she? If my sister-in-law goes out with her maid at night, what has that to do with the murder of the same maid a day and a night later?"

"I presume, sir," said Mr. Ussher coldly, "nothing. But it is my duty, sir, to trace every movement, every action of Hannah Davenal's life during the period immediately preceding her death. And, before attaching any weight to this story of a mysterious excursion of my lady and her maid, in the small hours of the morning—for it was in the small hours that Davenal and her companion were seen, it would be as well for me to ascertain, through you, sir, if any such excursion on Lady Tarleton's part took place."

Edward Stormont's answer was to rise and ring the bell.

"I beg your pardon, sir!" exclaimed the detective, rising hurriedly from his chair, "but what are you going to do?" Edward Stormont faced him loftily.

"Ask my sister-in-law to favour us with her presence!" he said.

(To be continued.)

Google

Catarrh and Consumption.

The constantly increasing death rate from consumption is a warning to those who suffer from chronic cold or catarrh in the head, according to the views held by the editor of the "Journal for the Deaf and Review of Diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat." In the last issue of the "Journal" this subject is discussed and several cases are given as illustrations of the tendency of nasal catarrh to extend to the throat and lungs. The tendency seems to be specially well marked in those who are subject to taking cold easily. In the same issue the editor also points out the success of the Drouet Institute in curing catarrh of the nose and throat in numerous cases where operations and cauterisations inside the nose had failed. As names and addresses are given, this will be of interest to those who have any form of catarrh of the nose, throat or ears. A free copy of the "Journal for the Deaf and Review of Diseases of the Nose, Throat and Ears," can be obtained by addressing the Secretary, Drouet Institute, 10 Marble Arch, London, W. The Journal also contains a Pathological Report Form, by means of which anyone can obtain free advice as to the treatment of deafness and ear, nose and throat diseases. The editor, however, advises patients, whenever possible, to attend the Institute for a personal examination.

Rupture Free Cure.

Wonderful Home Treatment that Cures Without Pain or Loss of Time.

Dr. W. S. Rice (Dept. 953), 8 & 9, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C., has invented a method that cures rupture without pain, danger, operation, or an hour's loss of time from the day's work. To avoid all questions of doubt, he sends free to every sufferer a free trial of his method, and there can be no earthly reason why anyone, rich or poor, should not avail themselves of this generous offer. As an instance of this remarkable method, the cure of Mr. John Foulkes, 317, Beaufort Street, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, is well worth noticing. Mr. Foulkes is 74 years of age, and had suffered from a scrotal rupture for nine years. He used Dr. Rice's home method of treatment, and in a short time was cured sound as a bell. A full description and sample of this remarkable method of cure will be gladly sent upon application. It has cured thousands. Do not hesitate to give it a trial. Write at once—to day.

Mr. J. FOULKES.

COMPLEXION AND HAIR.

We receive, from day to day, many letters from readers asking us how to clear the complexion of Blackheads, Freckles, Tan, Redness, etc. The most marvellous preparation that we know of is "PERALIA," manufactured by the "Peralia" Perfumery Co. of North Shields. This wonderful liquid, while it instantly beautifies the complexion, and removes all obnoxious excrescences, such as pimples and blotches, is perfectly harmless, and its purity is guaranteed by a well-known medical man, whose certificate accompanies each bottle. Besides acting on the above, "PERALIA," by frequent application, will remove wrinkles, crow's feet, and, in fact, entirely rejuvenate the features. This is due to its penetrating action, as it makes its way through the pores of the skin, exerting its beneficial effect on each and every one, and cleansing it effectually from dirt, callous growth, and decayed tissue. "PERALIA" is, in our opinion, the only beauty specific that does its work in such a thorough and scientific manner. It is the most successful remedy we have to aid us in the fight against the ravages of either Time or Disease. If you feel that your beauty is waning, or that fine complexion being marred by disfiguring humours, you should at once have recourse to "PERALIA."

We cannot speak too highly of this preparation. Readers can obtain it of all chemists, in bottles, at 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. 6d., but the proprietors offer to send a sample bottle, under cover, on receipt of the price, and 3d. postage.

In conclusion we must say a word for their unique preparation "CRIMPOLINE" for curling the hair. Most women, and all young girls are extremely anxious about their hair being trim, and yet having that graceful curly appearance that is so attractive. Unlike other curling fluids, "CRIMPOLINE" is not sticky, nor greasy, and curls the hair so much that once the hair becomes curly you need not continue using it. The rain does not take the curl out of the hair either after using "CRIMPOLINE," so you need not fear that washed-out, bedraggled look again.

It is used and recommended by Madame Patti, Vesta Tilley, Minnie Palmer, etc. Prices, 1s. 9d. and 2s. 6d. per bottle. When sending for, or ordering, "PERALIA," we advise you also to send for "CRIMPOLINE." Don't forget the address, "PERALIA" PERFUMERY CO., Dept. 14, Camden Street, North Shields.

JUNO CYCLES ARE THE VERY BEST.

Free Wheels. New Departure Hub, Bowden Brakes. All Improvements—Lamp, Bell, &c. Carriage paid.

Carr. Paid.

For Cash or 12 Monthly Payments of

£8 8s. 15/1 | £9 10s 17/6
£9 16/8 | £10 8s. 19/3

Juno Motor Cycle is the King of Motor Cycles, £32 or 60/- mo. Accessories at lowest prices; Acetylene Lamp, 2/11; Cycle Stand, 1/8; Motor Horn, 5/6.

Write for New Season List, 136 pages and 600 Illustrations, sent post free.—METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS Co. Ltd. (S.S. Dept.), 15 Bishopsgate Street Without, London, E.C. West End Showrooms: Piccadilly Circus, London, W.

REAL HEALTH.

It's always a pleasure to meet a woman with lovely complexion and bright spirits. But you cannot enjoy the best of health unless your system is in faultless order—every organ doing its appointed work and doing it regularly and well

TOWLE'S PILLS

have brought health to thousands of ailing women the wide world over, by relieving distressing complaints, and giving tone to the system generally. Avoid injurious imitations.

In Boxes, 1/1½, 2/9 and 4/6.

The 2/9 boxes contain three times the quantity of the 1/1½ size.)

of all Chemists, or Post Free on receipt of 15, 34, or 56 penny stamps or P.O.O. from the Sole Proprietors,

E. T. TOWLE & Co., Nottingham, Eng.

SENT ON APPROVAL

Ten Days Free Trial is allowed on every cycle we sell and the full price with all carriage charges refunded if unsatisfactory. 1903 Models

£3.10 to £6.10

New Departure Coaster Brake Front Rim Brake and highest grade genuine British made fittings and accessories.

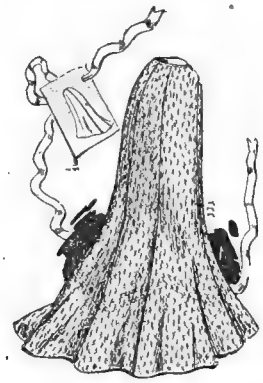
200 Good Second-Hand Cycles £1.10 to £2.10

Don't Fail to get our big illustrated catalogue before deciding on your 1903 machine. We save you money.

Rider Agents Wanted in every district to buy sample at *special price* and take orders for us. Large profits easily made in spare time. Address Dept. 44c,

MEAD CYCLE CO. Liverpool

Digitized by Google



GIVEN AWAY
With this week's
HOME NOTES
(No. 484)
A PAPER PATTERN
of this
SKIRT.

Of all Bookstalls and Newsagents.
PRICE ONE PENNY.

SULPHOLINE LOTION,
For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.
SHILLING BOTTLES.

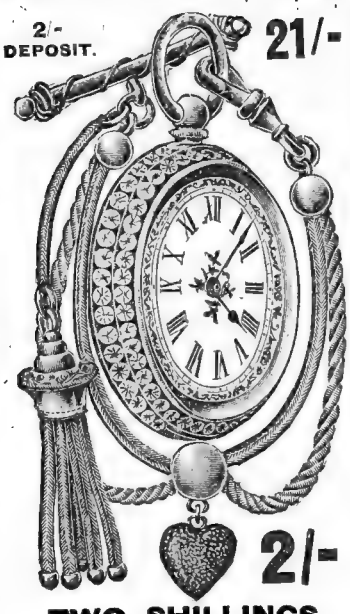
From Factory

to Rider.

How Does This Suit You?
Handsomest & Best of Cycles right away after payment Month's Instalment—or Deposit—as you wish. **£14 14s** Grade for **£6 10s** Write, H Dept, Williams' Direct Supply Mfg. Co., 12 Approach, London Bridge, London.

SONGS COPIED.
Legible as print, **5d.** page; transposed correctly, **6d.** page. Mrs. Conyers, Morchard Bishop, Devon. Recommended by the Marchioness of Waterford, Lady Arthur Hill, Miss Ellen Terry, etc.
Mrs. Conyers,
MORCHARD BISHOP, DEVON.

THE LADY'S SILVER
"MALVERN"
WATCH AND CHAIN.
2/- DEPOSIT. **21/-**



2/-
TWO SHILLINGS
deposit (and subsequent weekly or monthly payments to suit the convenience of purchaser) secures one of these elegant and thoroughly reliable Watches and Chains for £1-1-0 instead of £2-2-0, the usual retail price.

NO DISCOUNT WHATEVER can be allowed to customers sending cash in full with order, but they will be entitled to a week's free trial of the Watch and Chain; and Cash in full will be refunded if the articles are not approved.

SPECIFICATION.—The Lady's Silver "Malvern" Watch and Chain at £1-1-0 is a marvellous production and equal quality and value has not been attempted by any other firm in the world. The Watch is fitted with a horizontal movement of excellent quality; it is fully jewelled, carefully fitted and finished through-out and thoroughly sound in every respect. The cases are Sterling Silver, beautifully finished and richly engraved, artistic dial and gold compo hands, keyless or key-wind as preferred. The Chain is real Silver of elegant design and finish and strongly made; it is of full length but owing to want of space this cannot be shown in the illustration.

The Watch and Chain are forwarded post free, complete with signed warranty for ten years. *They are produced by special and greatly improved machinery, and are supplied DIRECT to the Purchaser, at a small commission on the actual nett cost of production.*

When writing, please mention this publication.

W. E. WATTS FOUNDED 1858. WHOLESALE DEPOT 106-108 DERBY R^D THE ONLY ADDRESS— NOTTINGHAM.

To CURE Drunkards

MRS. GEO. FULLER, *who saved her husband.*

There is a cure for Drunkenness which has shed its radiance into thousands of hitherto desolate homes. It does its work so silently and surely that while the devoted wife, sister, or brother looks on, the drunkard is reclaimed, even against his will or without his knowledge or co-operation.

This famous remedy has guided many a young man to sobriety and into the high road of fortune, and has saved the father, the brother, and the son.

If you send name and address to the Ward Chemical Company, 51 Century House, Regent St., London, W., they will post enough of the remedy free to show how it is used in tea, coffee, or food.

Mrs. George Fuller says:—"*I am only too thankful my husband never now wishes for intoxicating liquor. I gave him Antidipso in his tea and coffee, and it has quite cured him.*" With the

FREE TRIAL

Packet will be sent books and testimonials from hundreds who have been cured, and everything needed to save those near and dear to you. Don't neglect to write to-day.

Beauty.

Icilma is the only absolutely safe Natural preparation for the **Complexion**. All who wish to keep a good complexion or who have any skin trouble, however slight, should send 1d. stamp for postage of free sample and **Hygiene of the Skin** to ICILMA (Dept. 127), 142 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.

CHICKEN HATCHING EXTRAORDINARY FOR 2/6
The Texas Egg-Hatcher and Rearer combined supersedes all incubators. Hatches above and rears little ones below simultaneously all the year round. A money-making home industry requiring neither capital nor labour. Turns 1d. eggs into valuable Chickens or Ducklings. Millions selling in America. 15-egg size 2/6; 30-egg, 5/-; complete for use. Address, AMERICAN POULTRY SYNDICATE (Room 101), 7 Albion Grove, Stoke Newington, London, N.

2 PENCE DAILY
Any respectable person, male or female, can obtain a warranted cycle on easy payments of 1 shilling or more weekly. No guarantors required. Mutual trust between our patrons and ourselves. Catalogue Free. Symonds' London Stores, 124-128, City Rd., London, E.C.

ESTABLISHED 1851.
BIRKBECK BANK,
Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.
2½% DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS repayable on demand. **2½%**
The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free
C. A. RAVENSCROFT, *Managing Director.*

MACKINTOSH'S
IS DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS!
PUREST OF THE PURE. Sold Everywhere.
A very large Sample Packet sent post free for eight penny stamps. J. MACKINTOSH Ltd., The Toffee Mills, HALIFAX. *Wholesale dealers should stock this Toffee as it sells at sight.*
EXTRA CREAM TOFFEE

Digitized by Google

On the Rolling Wave.

She: "Take care, Alfred! That isn't the remedy for sea-sickness. Don't you see the bottle is marked poison?" He (groaning): "That's the one I want."

A Dangerous Time.

When a girl goes round the house pointing out pictures and things that are her personal property it is a pretty good sign that she is contemplating matrimony.

Sent a Substitute.

"You are not the young lady to whom I give lessons," said the music master. "No. The young lady to whom you give lessons is ill, and she has sent me to practise for her."

Mutual Exposure.

"Can you forgive me and love me still?" said the new bride, "when I confess that my teeth are artificial?" "Thank goodness," cried the groom as he snatched off his wig, "now I can cool my head."

A Gentle Hint.

"I've stopped asking people if my bonnet is on straight." The Husband: "Why, my dear?" The Wife: "I love you too much, John, to disgrace you by calling a body's attention to an old bonnet like this."

Sure Signs.

"I think Annie must have accepted young Willespoon last night," said Mr. Smith. "She hasn't said a word to me. What makes you think so?" asked his wife. "I ran across him several times to-day, and every time he saw me he turned as pale as a sheet."

Her Missionary Work.

The Pastor: "Miss Ethel, you should be engaged in some missionary work." Miss Ethel: "Oh, I am, and have been for some time past." The Pastor: "I'm so grateful to hear you say so. In what field are you engaged?" Miss Ethel (proudly): "I'm teaching my parrot not to swear."

Charlie's Strange Mistake.

Old Mrs. Jones entered the drawing-room unexpectedly and spoilt a very pretty tableau. "I was just whispering a secret in Cousin Jennie's ear," explained Charlie. "I'm sorry," said the old lady gravely, "that your eyesight has become so bad that you mistake Jennie's mouth for her ear."

Taking All the Curls.

"I am glad you like my new watch charm, Miss Laura. It is a pretty ornament I think, though it needs something to make it complete. May I ask you for a lock of your lovely hair?" "Certainly, Mr. Ferguson. You can have all you want, but—but—doesn't it seem a pity to mar the symmetry of these curls by cutting one off?" "It does," responded George, with quick and eager comprehension. "I wouldn't do anything for worlds to destroy their perfect symmetry. I'll take them all." And the youth ornamented the vicinity of his watch pocket with the entire head for a long, long time.

Different Men.

"I love and I am loved." "Then you must be perfectly happy." "But it isn't the same man!"

Trouble Taken in Vain.

Grace: "George, all is lost." George: "Why?" Grace: "Papa has oiled those squeaky shoes you bought him."

A Nasty Smack.

Ethel: "They say that Blanche is to marry a man old enough to be her grandfather." Florence: "Why, everybody knows there is no such man!"

Once Was Enough.

He: "I suppose that young idiot Smith has proposed to you a dozen times?" She: "No. Once was enough. Come and see us when we get settled."

A Dangerous Task.

She: "It must have taken a great deal of persistence on your part to learn to play the violin so well." He: "It did. I had to go constantly armed for five years."

No Fire After All.

He: "I heard an alarm of fire, I think. I must go and see where it is." Returning after twenty minutes: "It wasn't fire," he said shortly. "Nor water either," she replied, still more briefly.

Nicer to Ride.

"Algy, dear," she murmured, "I should be happy if I could walk through life hand-in-hand with you; but——" "But what, dearest?" he anxiously asked. "But I should be happier if I could ride."

Papa Would Not See.

George: "And if things do not go well with us the first year, darling, I—hem—presume your father will not see us suffer?" Birdie (sighing): "No, dear, poor papa's eyesight is growing rapidly worse, even now."

An Unwelcome Visitor.

She: "Papa says that when coming to see me you must not come in a 'bus any more." He: "Really! Does he expect me to walk all this distance?" She: "Of course not. He says all he asks is that you will come in a carriage hired by the hour."

Which Was the More Becoming?

"She is determined to be a musician, but cannot decide whether to make a speciality of the violin or piano." "Has she no positive predilection for either?" "Oh, yes; but some of her friends think she looks better standing, and others that sitting is more becoming to her."

He'd Made an Appeal.

"Wasn't that young Mr. Tiff who left the house as I came in?" asked the judge of his eldest daughter. "Yes, papa!" "Did I not issue an injunction against his coming here any more!" "Yes, papa; but he appealed to a higher court, and mamma reversed your decision."

The Postmistress Knew the Reason.

"Any letter for me?" asked a young lady of a post-mistress in a country town. "No," was the reply. "Strange!" said the young lady aloud to herself as she turned away. "Nothing strange about it!" cried the post-mistress over the counter. "You ain't answered the last letter he writ ye."

No Need to Waste Time.

"Harry," she said, "if a fire were to break out suddenly in the house what would be your first impulse, do you think?" "Well, my first thought would be for you, of course. I would get you to a place of safety, and then do what I could to extinguish the flames." "That would be very nice of you, Harry, to think of me first, but if a fire were to break out now, for instance, wouldn't you lose valuable time reaching me from such a long way across the room?"

Conducted by CYNTHIA.

[In this page are answered any letters from readers dealing with affairs of the heart, tangles in domestic life, or points of etiquette. All communications must be addressed to Miss Cynthia Hamilton, c/o the Editor of SHORT STORIES.*]*

The Troubles of a Colonial.

"HORTON," who is a Colonial, has been keeping company with a young lady for three years, but they are not engaged, as the young lady's mother will not give her consent. "HORTON" is thirty, and the young lady will be twenty-one this month, and the question he wishes answered is—"If I put up the banns, can her mother stop them? And if she tries to do so, is the minister compelled to take any notice of her? She has no reason whatever to stop them except her dislike to me."

* * * * *

When a girl becomes of age she is her own mistress and responsible for her actions. The mother, of course, can forbid the banns, but will be powerless to make them null and void unless she can show sufficient reason why this should be done. The mere fact of her objection to you would not be considered sufficient. I wish you every happiness, "HORTON," and hope that the young lady's mother will be won over to your side before the banns are put up. The scenes that follow the forbidding of banns are always unpleasant.

♣♣♣

Should She Become Engaged?

"MARECHAL NIEL ROSE" (whom I shall call "M. N. R.") has been keeping company with a young man for twelve months, and they are deeply in love with each other. Unfortunately, "M. N. R.'s" mother does not believe in love; she married for position, but has not been at all happy with her husband, so "M. N. R." is not encouraged to have a young man, and has not introduced her present one to her mother. The young man now says that he will have to go abroad for nearly four years, and wants "M. N. R." to become engaged to him before he starts, but she doesn't quite know what to do, because of her mother. Though she does not live at home, she feels she ought to be guided to a certain extent by what her mother says.

* * * * *

You are both very young, "M. N. R."—you say you are only twenty and he twenty-two—and I do not advise you to contract a definite engagement at present. Your mother's arguments would not carry much weight with me, as she has thoroughly proved for herself that marriage without love was an utter failure, but she is right in saying that this may be only fascination because of your youth.

* * * * *

Tell your young man that you do not see your way to entering into a definite engagement at present, but are willing to wait for him on the understanding that if either of you meets someone you like better, you are quite at liberty to become engaged without causing any bad feeling or mutual recrimination.

A Time of Probation.

"M. H." is not quite eighteen. She has kept company with a young man for three months, but he now tells her that they must be nothing more than friends for a stated time. "M. H." has promised to do this, and she wonders whether, if during this time she goes for a walk with any other young man is it likely to cause any difference between her and the original young man.

* * * * *

Provided you are satisfied with the explanation you received when your more intimate relations were turned for the time to those of friendship only, I think it would be much wiser for you not to accept invitations to go for walks with any other young man.

♣♣♣

What is the Matter?

"IN LOVE WITH A CUSTOMER"—please do not use such a long pseudonym again—keeps a tobacconist's shop. For some time a young man used to come in regularly several times every day, and always had a pleasant word for her, but latterly he has been coming very irregularly, and when he does come seems as if he could not be civil. "IN LOVE WITH A CUSTOMER" took a great liking to the young man, and wonders if she has done anything to offend him, and how she may find out without appearing to be forward.

* * * * *

You say his brother is a regular customer of yours, so surely it would be quite simple to inquire of him whether anything were the matter with the object of your fancy. Tell him you missed such a regular customer, and hoped you had done nothing to make him want to stay away, or something of that sort. The brother need have no suspicion that you are inquiring out of anything more than ordinary curiosity.

♣♣♣

Has She Another Lover?

"VIX" has been engaged to a young lady for a year. They do not live in the same town. He has written to her regularly twice a week, but has only heard from her seven or eight times, and then the letters are exceedingly cold. He cannot go to see her because of his business, and wonders how he is to find out whether she has ceased to care for him.

* * * * *

I should advise you to write to the young lady, "VIX," and ask her to name the day for the wedding. If you receive an evasive answer you will know that her affection towards you has cooled. Then you should ask her if this is the case, and whether she would like to be released from the engagement. It is no use continuing an engagement on such unsatisfactory terms. Your further procedure in the matter must be determined by her reply.

♣♣♣

An Indifferent Lover.

"F. N. A." is in love with a young man who has known her since she was a child, and once told her that he was deeply interested in her future. For a month or six weeks he is in the habit of paying her a good deal of attention, and then for a week or ten days he keeps away from her, after which he turns up again as if nothing had happened. "F. N. A." wants to know what she should do regarding his behaviour.

* * * * *

Next time he returns to you after one of these lapses, I should ask him pretty plainly for a full explanation. If he refuses to do this, tell him he needn't trouble to come again to see you. Treatment such as this should soon bring him to his senses, and you will quickly know one way or another whether he is serious or only trifling with your affections.

Cynthia

Printed by HORACE COX, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

This is our Trade Mark

THE

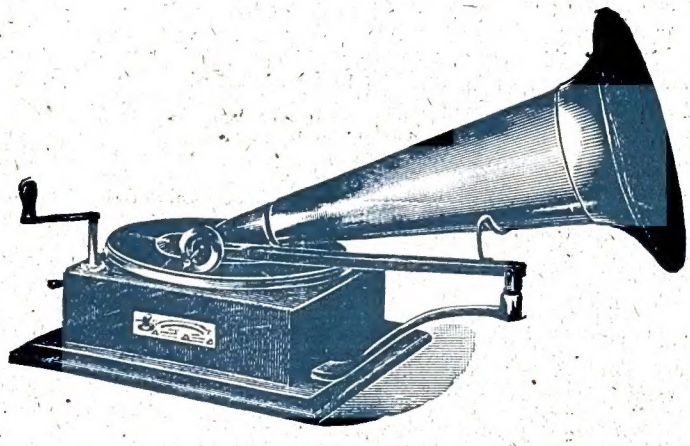
GRAMOPHONE

Entertains, Educates, and Teaches.

If you wish to cultivate voice reproduction, if you are anxious to improve your technique, you should listen to and learn by Gramophone Records made by the greatest singers and musicians of the world.

GRAMOPHONES.

No. 3 - - -	£3 3
No. 4 - - -	4 4
Monarch Junior	5 10
Monarch - -	7 10
Double Spring Monarch - -	10 0
Triple Spring Monarch - -	12 10



GRAMOPHONE RECORDS.

7 inch Records, 2s. 6d.
Grand Concert Records, 5s.
Red Label Records, 10s.
11 Special Records Sung by Cam. F. Tamagno, £1 each.

Monarch Junior, £5 10s.

The Gramophone is not a mere producer of a tune or a song but a scientific instrument which faithfully reproduces the actual voice or playing of a singer or a musical instrument combination. The Gramophone makes a home happy. It is the World's Entertainer. It reproduces the best music from every country in Europe at a trifling cost. Thanks to the Gramophone everyone can become acquainted with all that is best in the world of music.

On receipt of a postcard we will send you Catalogues and name and address of the nearest dealer in our Gramophones.

THE GRAMOPHONE AND TYPEWRITER LTD.,

21 City Road, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Cadbury's cocoa

THE STANDARD OF HIGHEST PURITY.—*The Lancet.*

Cadbury's is Cocoa and the Best Cocoa only.

ABSOLUTELY PURE.

"Cocoa alone is an excellent food as well as a stimulant, having a salutary action upon the nerve centres."
The Lancet.

"Cadbury's is a perfectly pure Cocoa of the highest quality."—*Medical Annual.*

A Perfect Beverage for all Seasons of the Year.

TO BE FIRST

Is to occupy an enviable position. Many aspire for first place, but few attain it. To acquire the lead, aspiration and push alone are not sufficient. Merit is required. This is exactly why . . . .

BEECHAM'S PILLS

stand foremost among medicines. They possess real merit, and have proved themselves worthy of a permanent position in the family medicine chest. Trial purchasers become regular users, because they find nothing to equal Beecham's Pills for dispelling

BILIOUS AND NERVOUS DISORDERS, Indigestion, Sick Headache, Languor,

and other such troubles which arise from a Disordered Stomach. They regulate and tone up the entire system. The genuine worth of BEECHAM'S PILLS has obtained for them the unique position of having the Largest Sale of any Patent Medicine in the World.

Sold Everywhere in Boxes, price 1/1½ (56 Pills) and 2/9 (168 Pills).

BIRD'S CUSTARD POWDER

BIRD'S CUSTARD is Pure, Nutritious, and easily digested. It is a delicious article of food for daily use. Exquisite for Luncheon, Dinner, or Supper. Eggs often disagree; BIRD'S CUSTARD never.

In Springtime,

BIRD'S CUSTARD AND RHUBARB. Wholesome and healthful, rich and creamy. BIRD'S CUSTARD is the one thing needed with all Stewed, Tinned, or Bottled Fruits. It enhances their flavor and imparts to them a grateful mellowness.

NO EGGS! NO RISK! NO TROUBLE!